

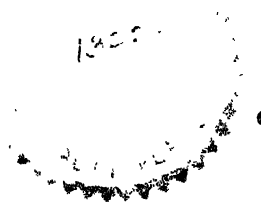
# POWER AND INFLUENCE



# POWER AND INFLUENCE

by

LORD BEVERIDGE



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To the Memory of  
my Father and my Mother,  
the first of all my friends



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# *Prologue*





## PROLOGUE

THIS book is autobiographical, in the sense that it is concerned mainly with personal experiences and activities of its author. This book is autobiography less for its own sake than as an illustration of the theme set in the title, of Power and Influence, the chief alternative ways by which things get done in the world of affairs.

Power, as the word is used here, means ability to give to other men orders enforced by sanctions, by punishment or by control of rewards; a man has power when he can mould events by an exercise of will; if power is to be used for good, it must be guided by reason and accompanied by respect for other men. The power mainly in view in this volume is the power of government, making of laws and enforcing them by sanctions, using the instrument of fear. But in any advanced society there is also power of money. Those who control money can bring about actions of other men, neither by threat of punishment nor by appeal to reason, but by giving or withholding rewards. The instrument of power in this form is self-interest, greed rather than fear.

Influence, as the word is used here, means changing the actions of others by persuasion, means appeal to reason or to emotions other than fear or greed; the instruments of influence are words, spoken or written, if the influence is to be for good, it must rest on knowledge. The term influence is used in echo of George Washington's observation when the Constitution of the United States was in the making: "Influence is not Government." Since I came to manhood I have seldom been without influence. I have as seldom had "Government," that is power, and I have had it under limitations. My experience is that pursuit and exercise of power do not sort naturally with pursuit of knowledge or appeal to reason. When I had most power, through control of money, in my first years as Director of the London School of Economics, I became too much absorbed in administration to be able to advance knowledge as I had hoped. And I have spent most of my life most happily in making plans for others to carry out. A possible sub-title to this work would be *Sic Vos Non Vobis* of the Roman poet Virgil. "So you not for yourselves." <sup>1</sup>

An alternative title for the work would be "Words and Friends."

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 1.

## POWER AND INFLUENCE

Throughout my life I have poured out words remorselessly in books, articles, memoranda, reports, records of travel, broadcasts, speeches and letters. Though I have retained few official documents, the total documentation available for me is immense, beginning with a stream of letters to my mother, or written conversations with her in her deafness, from the time when I was four years old to the time when I was fifty and she died. My mother preserved nearly every word of this. From her and from my father I caught the habit of keeping things written or printed. Long before I was fifty, I acquired secretaries who treasured every vagrant word I used and kept copies of everything going out and of nearly everything coming in. I have put head-notes to each chapter and to the Epilogue, drawn from words of mine, either contemporary with the chapter or bearing on its contents. I have printed in Appendix A documents and other matter illustrative of the text; much of this consists of earlier words of mine. I have printed in Appendix C a list of the twenty books and twelve official reports for which I am responsible, with a small selection of other writings.

Throughout my life I have worked with colleagues, in Whitechapel, in Fleet Street, in the Civil Service, in the Universities of London and Oxford, on innumerable Committees official and unofficial. How much everything that I have done owes to this free co-operation of equals in council is needless for me to say; it stands out in every chapter of this book. The greatest pleasure coming to me through writing these chapters has been rediscovery of so many friends, with whom I shared exciting tasks and cheerful days, from whom I learned so much. One of the sadnesses of the restricted world in which I am growing old is that it is not so easy as I should like, to see these friends again, and to feast and talk and play with them again. I hope that some of these of whose past work and play with me I have written here may see and approve my words, and find pleasure in rediscovering me. Many, of course, are gone.

One friend is different from the rest. I met my wife first in 1904 when she was Jessie Mair, wife of my friend and cousin David Beveridge Mair, and the mother or becoming the mother of those who are now my step-children. In World War I she became one of my colleagues, first in the Ministry of Munitions, then in the Ministry of Food; for eighteen years after that war she was my colleague in the London School of Economics and Political Science, and shared in everything that I did or attempted there and in many ploys outside. My cousin David died in July 1942. In December, just after the publication of my Report on

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Social Insurance and Allied Services, Janet and I were married; Jessy Mair of the earlier letters became Janet Beveridge. In this volume I have described her always as "J." as to her children she was commonly "J." in the Scottish form of "Jye."

Through choice of a special theme, this book has become in several ways different from what it might have been as a formal autobiography. It begins, for instance, not with my childhood and ancestry, but with the close of my formal education at Oxford, in 1902. It ends with the decision of the British democracy in 1945 that, whatever else happened to me, my political friends and I should not have political power.

With a view to concentrating on my theme, I deal here with some aspects only of the best-known episode in my life—The Beveridge Report of 1942 on Social Insurance and Allied Services. A good deal more of interest and amusement remains to be told about the origins of the Report and its reception in this country and in other countries—enemy, allied and neutral. Much of this will be told in a book now being written by my wife J. on *Beveridge and His Plan*. She will, I hope, find occasion to say more than appears in my volume about my earlier work on social insurance and perhaps about the period before my volume begins.

While the theme of my title—Power and Influence—has determined the scope of this book, there is a different theme which no book concerned with the past fifty years can exclude entirely. In those fifty years Britain and the world outside Britain have changed beyond recognition and beyond recall. In Britain the revolution has been mainly economic, though economic change is now affecting profoundly its political structure. The old distribution of wealth, the old relations of individual citizens, the old sources of the leadership which is indispensable for large societies have gone; fear of poverty has gone with them. The revolution in the world at large is mainly technical and political, and is greater even than the internal change in Britain. Total war, as we know it now, is different from wars known in the past. Total war, as we might know it if it came again, is a terror too fearful to contemplate. The old hope of securing to men the chance of happy activity under an anarchy of sovereign States, each licensed to kill without limit, selection or remorse, has gone for ever. As total war is different from past wars, so totalitarian rule is different from any despotism known in the past, in its efficiency for debasement of mankind.

The springs of these revolutions in Britain and outside Britain lie far back in history. The changes do not become overt—the lava did not

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begin to break through the crust above it—till well into this century. For Britain, 1906 is perhaps the beginning of her economic and social revolution; total war appeared first in 1914; totalitarian despotism is a creature of the period between the wars. The record of personal experiences given here begins before these dates; its earlier chapters are a way of illustrating by example what has vanished, so as to show the distance travelled.

This book is not a history or an estimate of these revolutions. That would need many volumes, not one volume. That must wait for other hands, when the revolutions have run their course; in many respects the extent and nature of these revolutions were only beginning to be understood when the main fighting ended in World War II and when the substance of my story ends. The aim here is more modest than a History of Our Times. The aim is a record of personal experience which may be of value to some historian in the future.

Yet, if only to preserve a sense of proportion in regard to the story I tell, something must be said, however briefly, as to things that have happened since the story ends, as to things that are happening today. No apology is needed for an Epilogue to my story. No apology is needed either for including in the story itself some of the lighter side of life, as I do in Chapter V and elsewhere. Those who seek to influence their fellows are more likely to influence them soundly if they are kept sound themselves by healing nonsense. Those who contribute to the picture of a revolution should picture all sides, not sad or serious things alone.

EDINBURGH,

# *Book One*

## **BEFORE TOTAL WARS**



## Chapter I

### FROM OXFORD TO WHITECHAPEL

I suppose power is the thing that everyone desires to exercise. I too, but . . . the power of knowledge and experience seems the only thing worth having.

Letter to my mother, at age 23, January 25, 1903.

FOUR years at Oxford left me at twenty-two with no clear idea as to what I should do next. But of the things said to me by my elders in those years one thing above all stuck in my mind. "While you are at the University," said Edward Caird, Master of Balliol, to me and to others, "your first duty is self culture, not politics or philanthropy. But when you have performed that duty and learned all that Oxford can teach you, then one thing that needs doing by some of you is to go and discover why, with so much wealth in Britain, there continues to be so much poverty and how poverty can be cured." Edward Caird, at the close of the nineteenth century, was speaking under the impact of Charles Booth's revelation of Life and Labour in London.

Caird's advice, however admirable in itself, threw no light on the problem of how I should set about the necessary task of earning my living as speedily as I could. Discovering the causes and cures of poverty was not in those days a recognised profession, with an income. But there were two or three prize fellowships in the offing, which might provide an income without commitment to a profession; I had followed religiously the first part of Caird's advice, and by sticking to my books had done just well enough in the Schools, ending with *Literae Humaniores* in June 1901, to make trying for a fellowship seem worth while. My father, who had been a judge in India, favoured my taking up the law and, though he had no money to spare, he was ready to back his fancy by helping to keep me at Oxford for another year. So, having failed in my first fellowship try, in *Literae Humaniores* at Merton in September 1901 (won by one of my nearest Balliol friends, H. W. Garrod), I came up for another year at Balliol, to work for the B.C.L. under Edward Jenks and to have a go at law fellowships in the following year. As it fell out, no less than three prize fellowships in law were due to be awarded in the autumn of 1902—at Merton, University and All Souls.

I did not in fact stay the whole of another year at Oxford. My closest

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friend of those days, Collings Carré, who was living in the Temple with Dick Denman, died tragically in February 1902, and I came to the Temple to keep Dick company in his place, though I returned to Oxford for the summer term.

I went on with the B.C.L. and the bar (joining the Inner Temple as a student) and began my round of fellowship examinations at the end of September. In the first of these, at Merton, I was placed fourth out of six candidates, Francis de Zulueta, an old opponent on the tennis court, being elected. In my next try, at University, I had better fortune. On the Sunday morning after the examination, while I was staying for the weekend at Hindhead, came a telegram to say that I had been elected at University and that the Fellows would like me to dine with them that evening. There were no trains on Sundays from my proper station, but I contrived to meet the wishes of the Fellows by walking eight miles from Hindhead to Godalming to catch a train there. I carried my dress clothes in a rucksack, but the Fellows noticed nothing unusual about them. I was told afterwards that in Law I had done no better in the examination than my nearest competitor, if indeed I had done as well (he was F. T. Barrington-Ward, who became Fellow of All Souls, Vinerian Scholar and K.C.), but that I had won on Latin Prose. Fortunately for me the Statutes of the Fellowship said that, in addition to knowledge of law, the person elected should give evidence of having the education of a gentleman; in 1902 this meant knowing Latin and Greek. What it means now is less certain.

The Stowell Fellowship, when I won it, was worth only £120 a year, derived from a special endowment; later it was raised to the standard of prize fellowships in those days—£200 a year. I was told by the Bursar of the College that, as a Fellow, I was entitled to a set of rooms in the College, but that the College was very full. I took the hint and went back to live with Dick Denman in London, coming up only for College Meetings and other special occasions, and staying in such rooms as I could get.

I had arranged already through the help of Edward Jenks to read in Chambers with H. W. Loehnis, then running level with Atkin and Scrutton as one of the leading juniors in the Commercial Court, with marine insurance as a specialty. The work in this special field was interesting and at the same time with its occasional humorous side.

I remember, for instance, the case of a ship at anchor in a roadstead on the coast of Africa which, by a hurricane beginning one afternoon, was broken from her moorings and wrecked, striking land on the morning



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after. The crew made depositions at the time telling how they fought all night to save the ship and had hoped to do so till the last moment before she struck. But it happened that the ship was insured under a time policy expiring at the critical midnight, after she had begun drifting but before she struck the beach; she was only one of several ships in like case. So the crew's depositions did not suit the book of the ship-owners at all; they wanted to make out that long before midnight the ship was doomed—a total wreck which would be covered as occurring while the insurance policy was still in force. The crew were most ready to oblige their employers. So one after another they came into the witness-box, to declare, with engaging simplicity under satirical cross-examination, that their first depositions were mistaken; looking back, they realised now that from early afternoon there had never been any chance of saving the ship. They were not believed by the judge, but they brought a refreshing air of the sea into the Courts of Justice.

I remember also a trade union case<sup>1</sup> in which an individual miner was suing the Yorkshire Miners' Association, of which he was a member, to stop payment of strike pay, on the ground that the strike had not been authorised in accord with the rules; Loehnis appeared for the Association. Two points struck me about the case: first the bias, as it appeared to me, shown by the judge against the union; second, that the colliery company, wishing to make the strike impossible, were almost openly financing the nominal plaintiff and were really at the bottom of the action. "Why they don't get sued for maintenance of another's suit I can't say." So I wrote in telling my father about the case.

But interesting as much of my work in Chambers was, there was much of it also that seemed a poor use of one's energy. Discovering from a mass of correspondence which of two equally rich business firms had been more unbusinesslike in its letters and must therefore bear the loss, which it could well afford, on a joint enterprise that had gone wrong seemed to serve no social purpose. And even when the problems set to me raised interesting points for legal argument, as they often did, particularly in marine insurance, each problem was apt to be separate from the one before and my own work was as individual and disconnected as the problems.

Nor was it clear that there was a living in near prospect for me at the bar. I had no influence of any kind, and though I knew that one could make good without influence, the bar as a living seemed organised either

<sup>1</sup> *Howden v. Yorkshire Miners' Association*. The case arose out of a dispute at the Denaby and Cadeby Main Collieries.

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to give one not enough work to live on or give so much work as to leave one's life without happiness.

I think that in the end I would have succeeded at the bar—in the tradition of W. O. Danckwerts if in no other line; I saw Danckwerts more than once in action—an arguer without oratorical graces, but formidable to opponents and to the judge alike, a mine of knowledge always ready to explode. But I might never have come through at all. My tutor Edward Jenks thought well enough of me to offer to me once, a lifetime of scholarship in helping to edit the Year Books. But he expressed doubts to me also as to my suitability for the bar. “The defects discovered by Mr. Jenks,” I wrote to my mother, “are not moral or intellectual, so be comforted; they are mainly connected with a certain excitability which seems to have lurked in me unawares for many years.” The bar began to look to me like a gamble with little fun.

And though I liked the older men with whom I worked in Chambers, their example was not encouraging to go on and become like them. One of these older men, now Loehnis' devil, had once had a substantial practice of his own, but had lost it, through some accident of illness or of death of a solicitor; he had come back to being a devil. Loehnis himself had been through a long struggle for success. When, towards the end of my year with him, I told him that I was leaving the bar as a profession, he answered that he was not surprised. He was having far more to do than he could manage, but he could not yet take the risk of refusing briefs. His own life now, he said, hardly seemed worth living. He was in simple fact being worked to a standstill. Ten months later, an illness caught him without resistance and killed him.

I felt bound both to my father and to the memory of Lord Stowell to give the law a trial. But three months' experience in Chambers and reflection over Christmas decided me against going on. My New Year's resolution for 1903 was to abandon the bar as a profession. My parents were at that time in Florence with my sister, whose health was giving rise to anxiety. So I set out my decision and the reasons for it in an interminable letter to my mother, written from the Temple, to Italy.

My dearest Mother,

January 25, 1903.

I have two pieces of news for you, one unimportant but as I am afraid you are sure to think bad, the other important—whether good or bad you yourself shall decide.

The bad news is that in talking of coming to Italy in March I fear I reckoned without my host—who for this purpose is the Law Courts. . . .

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My important (to me at least) news is that I am not going to be a practising barrister. I came to this resolution exactly three weeks ago but not wishing to act hastily let it mature and stand the test of different moods. Having stood till now and having been submitted to Dick a fortnight ago and entirely approved by him (spite of his admiration of the profession) I think it has proved strong enough to be acted upon. . . .

My reason for not becoming a practising barrister is simply that I should not be able to regard this as anything but a sale of the next twenty or twenty-five years of my life for the chance of achieving sufficient position and money to do something with the remainder. I am not prepared to make that bargain. This implies of course that I should not regard these first twenty or twenty-five years as living in any satisfactory sense or as in themselves worth much. I think that is so. In the first place everything the practising barrister does is so transitory—it is a mental living from hand to mouth with no single object. Of course, the decision of a case means something to the parties; to the barrister it is simply an intellectual exercise which leaves no trace behind; he in no way leaves the world either better or worse than it was—except to the very small extent to which he may have helped to build up the Law. But of course, the barrister's share in that is trifling compared with the judge's and moreover the number of cases (out of the total number) which raise any new point of law is very small and infinitely less is the number of those which raise any point of legal principle or policy. In the second place the work is essentially solitary and self-centred not to say selfish. One never gets the sense of working either with or for other people—and one or other of these things I cannot do without. (You won't of course misunderstand me and think I include either the scholar or the scientist under this head of being self-centred—they always are a part of and have their defined place in the general progress of human knowledge and work with the dead or for the future at least.) Of course a barrister is on the same side as his solicitor for the time being and probably with some other barrister but that of course is merely for the moment. . . .

As this was not enough to say against the bar, I went on to denounce it as "both worldly in the extreme and remote from reality."

It has nothing to do with any real problems and difficulties and does not go about slaying any dragons (except of course when once in a

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blue moon a question of legal principle arises and then the judge does most of the slaying).

With obvious pride in the simile, I compared the bar as a life to "the solving of endless chess problems with the chance of a prize at the end."

The intellectual exercise may be finer and more varied at the bar but it is exactly the same in kind, i.e. it is mere intellectual exercise. Now I do not care for chess problems except as a very occasional recreation.

But what of the "prize at the end"? Well, the prize meant being "either a judge, i.e. more chess problems though I grant from a more interesting standpoint . . . or a politician." Having dismissed the judge briefly, I spread myself on the politician:

Of course for politics the bar gives one great advantage (to the successful) which I at least should not get otherwise—namely a certain amount of money combined of course with practice in thinking and talking—a sort of position. That is to say one gets power in one shape and I suppose power is the thing that everyone desires to exercise. I too, but . . . it is just that sort of power which rests upon money and position that I should care very little about; the power of knowledge and experience seems the only thing worth having. The successful barrister who goes into politics must really be a tool in the hands of others; he cannot of his own knowledge form his own opinions because he has never had time to acquire that knowledge. . . . For I don't really see how a barrister in good practice (at least a junior) has time to make himself master of anything while practising. His hours are ten to seven and briefs to take home and read after dinner. If he has not a good practice he is merely wasting his time.

So I came to what I really wished to do, with a last kick at the bar:

The one thing in which I am interested wholly and completely is the getting to know something about human society and working at some part of its machinery. (I avoid "social problems" because it always suggests "slumming" and drink and I mean something other—simply the question of under what conditions it is possible and worth while for men as a whole to live.) I get no help in that at the bar except the possibility at forty-five (more probably fifty) of hastily snatching up and putting into action somebody else's suggested solution (or possibly one that I made up myself while driving back

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from my work in a motor-car). But there comes in a special reason why I above all people should not choose this course: namely that I am slow of invention and in getting convictions. I think I am capable of doing something or other but I must have time to think about it first and the successful bar gives one no time to think.

What I print here, with apologies to the great profession of the bar, is less than half of what I wrote to my mother in January 1903. I had the face to tell her towards the end of 2,500 words, that there was much more that I could say, but I hoped I had said enough to make her think as I did. There were many similar letters to follow. Mothers are a long-suffering race.

This first letter contains a forecast of the distinction which fifty years after I have embodied, with a verbal change, in the title of this volume, between power resting on position and that resting on knowledge. It contains also a somewhat unexpected (for January 1903) reference to a motor-car and a first statement of interest in the nature and the moulding of human society. But in the main it is confined to clearing the ground of any commitment to the law as a way of earning a living.

My New Year resolution of 1903 was purely negative—with no clear idea of what I should do instead of the bar. I wrote vaguely of doing something in education and even more vaguely of getting into "some piece of government machinery preferably local or municipal." My first thoughts were not of Toynbee Hall.

I had heard of this institution and of social problems occasionally at Oxford, by attending College Meetings addressed by Canon Barnett or other residents. I helped once to entertain a party from Limehouse in punts on the Cherwell, and in my third year I went to stay as a visitor at Toynbee Hall for two days, but my report of this to my mother is a dull sightseer's description. I suspect that both of these experiences were discouraging, rather than encouraging to me; the dislike of "slumming" and "good works" which I expressed later, in arguing with my parents about Toynbee Hall, was genuine and not assumed for the sake of argument. When in July 1902 W. H. Forbes, the most active for Toynbee of the Balliol dons, asked if I would consider going to Toynbee Hall for a salaried post, my answer was negative: I was going to read in Chambers.

When, six months later, I had decided to finish with the bar, the first alternative that I explored practically was that of education, by going to see Michael Sadler, then in charge of Special Inquiries at the Board of Education. I was sent to Sadler in the first instance by Canon Barnett;

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and he talked to me for an hour and a half. Getting into the administration of education meant getting trained as a teacher:

The general result is that the Education Office is rather inaccessible without certain qualifications of teaching experience at present and that the same applies to all reasonably good local work. Then . . . he suggested ways of qualification some of which are neither interesting nor remunerative in themselves, others which are, and gave me a letter of introduction to follow up the track of these others. Which letter—to the principal of a big training college for teachers—I shall use and get further information.<sup>1</sup>

Sadler's talk made me rather unhappy. I should apparently have to go through the form of getting trained as a teacher, with no intention of remaining a teacher. I wrote to the training college principal nevertheless. But before he could see me, Canon Barnett asked me to call on him again, and came out with another suggestion—that I should become Sub-Warden to him at Toynbee Hall. I asked time to think this over and consult my parents. But they were in Italy still and effective consultation was impracticable. At a second meeting with Canon Barnett on April 27 I agreed to accept the post of Sub-Warden, if offered to me, at a salary of £200 a year as from September 1, 1903. I wrote the next day to my father, to announce this decision and to defend it.

My father, who was himself a model of quixotic devotion to any cause in which he believed, felt my breaking with the law as a profession even more deeply than did my mother. He quoted Quintilian at me: "*Durandum quia coepisti.*" He bade me read Dean Stanley's Life of his father (the Bishop of Norwich) as a book which in the opinion of another biographer "should be put into the hands of all men who have, against their will, entered professions for which they feel themselves naturally unfitted." He reminded me that to do any good in the world two things were necessary—competence and knowledge, and that my new departure held no prospect of either of these things. But above all he wanted me to stick to his own old love of law and its improvement:

There is perhaps no more pressing work than the Reform of the Law, but nobody will listen to you unless you have been through the mill.

<sup>1</sup> This letter, written to my sister in Italy on April 8, contains an account of a new circulating library called the "Booklovers' Library" which some friends of ours were thinking of joining. "Its great features are that it has no book in it more than six months old (think of that for a booklover!) and that its membership is limited to those to whom the directors are 'pleased to extend their invitation to join.' This precious affair as you may imagine emanates from America."

## OXFORD TO WHITECHAPEL

Take Jeremy Bentham as your model—a man whom I greatly admire and consider as the legal Comte. He did not practise but he studied law hard and *approfondised* it. If you can do anything in his wake you will do far more good than by superintending soup-kitchens for the proletariat or trying to be genial to people with whom you have little in common. I don't want you to be a Chief Justice or a Lord Chancellor but I would like you to be a great jurist. Perhaps you feel yourself unfitted for the turmoil of the law-courts, and you know I don't look forward to your being a leader at Nisi Prius or an Old Bailey cross-examiner but the Law is a Palace with innumerable side passages and havens of rest. Your supposed unfitness may be all a mistake.

My poor father also received an interminable answer. I tried in this to make plain that my views about soup-kitchens and genial smiles for the proletariat were the same as his:

If anyone ever thought that colossal evils could be remedied by small doses of culture and charity and amiability I for one do not think so now. The real use I wish to make of Toynbee and kindred institutions is as centres for the development of authoritative opinion on the problems of city life.

I accepted my father's doctrine that my aims should be competence and knowledge, but denied that the barrister's profession would give me either:

The bar gives no competence but dependence followed possibly at an uncertain period by affluence. . . . The practical work of the law . . . loads one with a great deal that is not knowledge but is technical skill and necessary for the K.C. but not for me.

I disposed of the great shade of Jeremy Bentham:

The last century has been one gigantic legal reformation; the law no longer bristles with cruel and destructive anomalies and injustices. Anomalies and injustices there are in plenty but they do not infest the whole law; they lurk in odd corners and the loopholes left by reforming statutes—they worry the practitioner and defeat perhaps some just cause once in ten years. Then there is another class of legal reforms needed at the present day—vitally important and resembling neither Bentham reforms nor the legal emendation I have spoken of just now. These are the reforms suggested by big underlying social

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questions—take for instance the case of Trade Union Law on which there is quite certain to be early and bad legislation. A reform of that sort is rather social than legal; it is the adaptation of law to a new order of society and is a matter neither for Jeremy Bentham nor the Law Lords—but for a combination of political philosopher, economist and (moderately learned) lawyer.

Having added other instances of social questions with a legal side—Landlord and Tenant, Companies and Marriage—calling for attention, I summed up: “I don’t think Bentham’s work is really again to do.”

Fathers have at times to be as long-suffering as mothers. The letter of April 28, 1903, from which these quotations come ran in total to 1,800 words. My chief comfort today is that my father had no need to read it. It was too late to catch him in Italy and by the time that I met my family at Southampton on May 5, though the formal appointment at Toynbee Hall had still to be made, I had burnt my boats. I could do nothing but give the bad news. It was as miserable a time for all of us as I can remember.

But an Oxford friend, a distinguished lawyer and Indian Civilian, Sir William Markby, came to the rescue. In answer to an appeal from my mother, while denying responsibility for what had happened, he gave a different colour to my action and my prospects, and he had the guile to sweeten his letter with some words about myself with which my mother was certain to agree:

He is not an ordinary man either in ability or character. Besides his University distinctions he won the friendship of some of the very best men of his time—and whilst he has no doubt undertaken a very difficult task he will I think be able to go through with it.

On receipt of this, my mother wrote to me that she found herself hoping that I would get my wish. “Such I fear is the mother’s nature and the nature of this one in particular who understands somewhat of what underlies all this in you. I hope you will let us know as soon as you know what has been decided, and if anyone asks—you may say that (with limitations) I approve your becoming S.W.T.”

When my mother wrote this, the appointment proposed for me by Canon Barnett still required the consent of the Council of Toynbee Hall, but the Council of course said ditto to the Canon. With my mother’s letter of limited approval, I received the formal offer of the post. I accepted it, to begin on September 1, and turned to make the



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best of the B.C.L. examination in June. The taking of this examination was a condition of my fellowship and I saw no reason for surrendering the fellowship because I did not mean to practise at the bar. The Master of the College, in whose hands I left the matter, agreed with me. So did Sir William Markby. Later, I tried to give up the fellowship as a measure of the University Reform on which Harry Tawney and I were engaged. But this came to nothing. The Stowell Fellowship continued to help in sustaining me till 1909, and my tenure of it became, a generation later, the basis of an invitation to return to the College as Master.

In June 1903 I achieved the distinction of appearing with Andrewes Uthwatt and Barrington-Ward in the second class of the B.C.L., with no one in the first class. But I did not finish thus with the law completely. Later, I came to frame a good deal of law as a civil servant and I did this better for my legal training. Immediately I pursued study of a topic already mentioned—the law of trade unions as affected by recent decisions of the House of Lords. This study led to the production of a portentous article on “The Reform of Trade Union Law—A New Proposal,” which, after being tried on various editors, was accepted at last in a much reduced form—cut from 10,000 words to 7,000—by the *Economic Review*, then maintained by the Christian Social Union. So far as I know, no one except the Editor of the *Economic Review* read this work when it appeared in April 1905, or at any later time. It was my first appearance as Jeremy Bentham *redivivus* and my last.

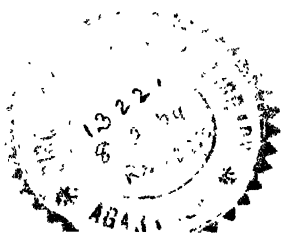
My decision at the age of twenty-four to abandon the bar as a profession and to become Sub-Warden of Toynbee Hall was the most difficult decision that I have ever been called on to make alone. It was in no sense an obvious course; it caused great unhappiness to my parents; it led to no recognised career. Canon Barnett told me at the time that for an experienced Sub-Warden he would have paid £350 a year in place of the £200 a year which he offered to me; I remember saying to myself that my decision might mean that I should never have more than £400 a year in all my life. I put a better face on the affair to my own mother, but when, soon after, a mother of charming daughters asked me what the Sub-Wardenship would lead to, I could not give her an encouraging reply.

Yet in the event my decision proved, from a worldly point of view, to be the best choice of occupation that I could have made. In little more than two years' time I left the Sub-Wardenship with the Canon's blessing for a job that combined adequate income with abundant leisure; two years after that I found jobs of all sorts being thrust upon me. All these

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chances of earning a living by doing what pleased me came through the special knowledge that I gained in Whitechapel.

I think also that my decision of 1903 represented a good use of the bounty which as a prize Fellow I enjoyed from the past benefactors of my College. I daresay that I would have taken the Sub-Wardenship £200 even if I had not had the Stowell £120 as well. But the fellowship helped the decision. I used it for the purpose for which prize fellowships seemed to me to be intended—that of continuing one's education away from Oxford. There are practically no prize fellowships now. What can or will take their place?



## Chapter II

### WHITECHAPEL AND SO TO FLEET STREET

Such places [as Toynbee Hall] represent simply a protest against the sin of taking things for granted, in particular taking one's own social position or conditions for granted.

Letter to my mother, at age 25, November 28, 1904.

TOYNBEE HALL was the invention of one man, though not the man after whom it was named. In 1872 Samuel Augustus Barnett, then a curate in Kensington, came to be Vicar of St. Jude's in Whitechapel, by repute one of the worst parishes in London for poverty and crime. He conceived the idea that one of the things wrong with London was its physical separation into cities of the poor and cities of the well-to-do, an East End and a West End. This meant that the former lacked men of leisure and education for their necessary common activities; it meant that the latter were ignorant of the nature and consequences of poverty.

This evil had been appreciated before Barnett's time in Whitechapel. Edward Denison, a young man of aristocratic descent, generally regarded as the first settler, had established himself in 1867 in Stepney, with the double object of learning the facts of life in East London and of being on the spot to help if exceptional distress should come. Edmund Hollond, another early settler of like type, became one of those responsible for suggesting to the then Bishop of London the appointment of Samuel Barnett to St. Jude's. In doing so he started something greater than he could have expected. Barnett, himself an Oxford man, soon began a regular series of visits to his old University and to Cambridge to bring Whitechapel to knowledge there. He persuaded individual friends of his to come for long visits to the East End; one of these was Arnold Toynbee, a don at Balliol—Apostle Arnold as he came to be to his friends. But visits were not enough. After a few years Barnett contrived the foundation of a Settlement where men of University type—civil servants, barristers, doctors and so on—while pursuing their avocations, could live together and become citizens of the East End rather than of the West End. The body established to maintain and control this venture was the Universities Settlement Association. The Settlement, named after Arnold Toynbee who had died recently, opened its doors in December 1884.

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Toynbee Hall, with this foundation, was placed inevitably in Whitechapel, next door to the Church of St. Jude, whose Vicar became its Warden. It stood and, subject to damage by bombings, it stands still off Commercial Street, within a hundred yards of one of the busiest traffic centres in London, known popularly as Gardiner's Corner, from the shop which is the most prominent feature.

Toynbee Hall in this roar of traffic was an oasis of quiet. A long arched tunnel under the Warden's Lodgings led into a quadrangle surrounded by Hall and Common Room and Library, with the single rooms of the residents mainly above; behind the main block there was in my time a hard tennis court. The residents paid the full cost of their board and residence. The Settlement proper was self-supporting. Only for educational and social activities organised through the residents were any contributions from outside required.

Every resident, in addition to paying for his board and lodging, was expected to give some of his spare time to public or social work. What he did and how he did it was in his free choice. Toynbee Hall proclaimed itself a Settlement, not a Mission for any prescribed purpose. The only condition of becoming a recognised resident was that one should by one's own freely chosen activity show reason for living in Toynbee Hall rather than in, say, the Temple or Hampstead. This condition was applied through a rule making residence probationary for three months. Thereafter the established residents passed judgment on the probationer. They could by vote admit him to full residence enabling him to stay indefinitely or they could decline to admit; this gave notice to him that he had better live elsewhere.

The number of residents in my time ranged from fifteen to twenty. They included a few like myself holding posts connected with Toynbee Hall or with philanthropic activities; one of my Oxford friends—Harry Tawney—later to marry my sister, came at nearly the same time as myself to live at Toynbee Hall, while earning his living as Secretary of the Children's Country Holiday Fund. There were others who had come to devote practically their whole lives to the East End—notably Henry Ward, by profession an engineer, a resident for thirty years and member of the L.C.C. for even longer, and H. S. Lewis, a leading figure in the Jewish population of Whitechapel. But the bulk of the residents had paid jobs to which they went westwards daily; in the Civil Service, in local government, in law, medicine, journalism or other professions. In addition to those still resident, there were former residents who still devoted all or most of their time to work they had taken up at Toynbee

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Hall and who came about the place continually. Notable among these were G. L. Bruce and Cyril Jackson of the School Board, T. H. Nunn of the Charity Organisation Society, and R. W. Kittle who, having come as a barrister to live at Toynbee Hall, had given up legal practice and devoted himself to the schools and children of East London.

Toynbee Hall and the settlements which followed it in many countries have been the subject of books and articles.<sup>1</sup> It is no part of my purpose to estimate the contribution which this widespread movement has made to social progress. I must be content to add to the story some personal experiences and show something of what Toynbee Hall gave to one of its residents.

As Sub-Warden I was at Toynbee Hall day and night. My responsibilities were emphasised by the Canon himself going to Italy for three or four months soon after I arrived; this was a deliberate testing of me. But, before he went, he had started me on what was to be my chief interest for many years—the problem of unemployment. These were the days of cyclical fluctuation of trade and of Mansion House Funds for relief of the unemployed. By the end of 1903 trade and employment were on the down grade from the boom of 1900. The Canon, with the Bishop of Stepney (Cosmo Gordon Lang) and other leading East Enders, launched in November 1903 a plan for relief on the “colony” system—of offering to unemployed men labouring work in the country away from home, with board and lodging for them and an allowance to their wives in London. A Mansion House Committee, which had existed in a state of suspended animation since the last cyclical depression in 1895, was called together, and the Lord Mayor was induced to make an appeal to finance the Canon’s scheme. The Canon produced not only the scheme, but from Toynbee Hall the young men to administer it, in particular H. R. Maynard and myself, with help from Harry Tawney and others. So I was set to learn about the main economic problem of those days, not from books, but by interviewing unemployed applicants for relief, taking up references from former employers, selecting the men to be helped, and organising the relief work. This Mansion House Fund of 1903–04 remained small in scale; there was no exceptional unemployment to produce large subscriptions; the total raised was about £4,000.

We spent this money in giving work—at the Salvation Army Colony at Hadleigh and on Osea Island in Essex—to 467 men, for periods

<sup>1</sup> Special reference may be made to *Toynbee Hall* by J. A. R. Pimlott (J. M. Dent, 1935) and to *Toynbee Hall and the Settlement Movement* by Werner Picht, written originally in German and translated and published in Britain (George Bell and Sons, 1916). Each of these books has a bibliography.

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ranging from a few days to fourteen weeks, after which they came back to East London. Then, having applied the Canon's new "colony" system of relief, we did something new on our own account. A few months after the relief works had closed we visited all the men we had helped, to discover whether they had found regular work or what had happened to them. We found that most of them were as before—dropping into and out of jobs, scratching along somehow—just as they had done for years. I remember asking myself what had gone wrong with economic laws in East London; if there was no demand for these men why did not they either go away or starve and die? What kept them just alive where they were? From this came the theory of under-employment and the reserve of labour, as I developed it later in articles and lectures and in *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*.

I did many other things than work at the Mansion House Relief Fund. I was made to edit the *Toynbee Record*, a monthly journal of our activities, and, like all new editors, I set out to make it different from its past. Like all editors of such journals I found myself writing a great part of it myself. I described the *Record* once to my mother as "the one really good thing I have done for Toynbee Hall." Writing and editing it was certainly good for me—preparation for my later move to Fleet Street.

I was made a School Manager for a school in Old Montagu Street, and in that capacity, as I wrote to my mother, I helped to choose a head-mistress for a Board School "from three ladies each old enough to be my mother." I do not think I did much good as a Manager: I had the chastening experience once, as I walked round the school, of seeing the class-teacher, as soon as she noticed me through the glass door, throw up her hands in despair at the interruption and the boredom of my coming questions. But I had another experience of a different kind which helped towards filling a column of the *Toynbee Record*. As I was walking full of my own thoughts through Whitechapel "in that loneliest of all earthly places—an ordinary London street," I found a small hand slipped into my own from behind. I was adopted as the natural expected friend of many hundred children, because I had been seen in their school as a Manager with R. W. Kittle. I reaped the fruit of friendship planted by his forty years of service to children.

Life at Toynbee Hall was full of varied experiences and personal encounters. I became a visitor for the Children's Country Holiday Fund, with the duty of calling on the parents of children who had put down their names for a holiday, to see if the parents really meant to send them and

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would pay the sum required. In Dunk Street, Whitechapel—about as dismal and ill-smelling a street as I had seen (the smell came from sugar-refining) the mother told me they wouldn't send the child for a holiday through me as they were all going shortly to the country anyhow—to Woolwich. "You'll like that," said I. "Oh no, I shan't. I've lived in Dunk Street for twenty years and don't want to leave it at all." On almost my next visit, I met acceptance of fate in a different form. In the room which I entered a man was lying in bed. "We don't know whether we can send the child or not," said the wife. "My husband is very ill and I don't know whether he will still be alive when the holiday comes." All this spoken loud enough for the man in the bed to hear.

With the Canon I interviewed a wild-looking young man with a plan for getting workpeople to ask for education before it was given to them; when Albert Mansbridge had left us, the Canon turned to me and said: "That young man has fire in his belly." On behalf of the Canon I presided soon after at a Toynbee meeting to launch the Workers' Educational Association.

I took part in local elections of all kinds. By gigantic efforts I got a curate elected to the Stepney Borough Council as an Independent, defeating by ten votes the weakest of three Moderates—a Jewish publican; his look of blank misery when the result was certain sticks in my mind after fifty years. I ran a Committee Room in Whitechapel at an L.C.C. election for G. L. Bruce and another Progressive, W. C. Johnson, and lost the seat for the former; he was ousted by an Independent standing on his Jewish race. Much of my time in the Committee Room was devoted to keeping out or kicking out three costers who said their union had sent them to work for Johnson and the Jew; kicking them out became harder as they became more and more drunk in the course of the day. I tried in vain to save for the Borough Council an excellent Labour man who didn't want to keep every alien immigrant out of Stepney; he lived in an attic above a riverside warehouse, with a great window over the river and full of scents of merchandise. I canvassed laboriously many times and learned the nature of our electorate. My shortest interview was with a lady who said at once that she would vote for my candidate, then asked who I was for, and then shut the door.

By way of seeing another side of East London life Tawney and I joined a Workmen's Club in Bethnal Green. This club had at one time had educational aims, but they had gone into the background. It was prosperous through its sale of drink. It taught me how to play shove-halfpenny and how to order a "pony" and so avoid too long a drink.

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We did not find the club a way into East London at all. Over shove-halfpenny we got friendly there with a very pleasant young man—I think he was a postman—and talked of meeting again and seeing his home. But when we came next, he wouldn't speak to us. He must have inquired about us and decided that we were not his class. It is easier for men of different upbringings to work together than it is for them to play together, except in those sports which are organised as work. That is how we read this incident at the time.

But one did not have to go abroad for experiences. They came to the door of Toynbee Hall, and as my room was on the ground-floor, close to the door, I often answered the bell. I opened it once on a fine bearded figure of a man who said that he was looking for a place in which to compose an election address on the higher ideal of life for Lewisham; there was a by-election in prospect. Remembering the *Punch* cartoon of the lunatic and the fisherman,<sup>1</sup> I said: "Come inside," and I kept him to luncheon, where he told one of our most serious-minded educationalists that every man worth anything had been a truant at school. My visitor was Stewart Gray, who became known as leader of the hunger marchers. I opened the door on another occasion to a Zionist anxious to promote oppression of Jews in England, so as to consolidate nationalism among the Jews.

But most of my casual visitors had more practical aims; they were professionals living by their wits. I entertained one once who claimed to be the illegitimate son of a Fellow of a Cambridge College. He had the name, College and date of residence all correct, as I verified from the University Calendar. There was probably a regular trade in common lodging houses of stories of this kind for getting money from the charitable unwise.

There were far more beggars about then than there are now. I remember putting to myself the problem: if I was nearly but not quite sure that a man who asked me for help, with a plausible story of hard luck, was in fact a professional and a fraud, was I entitled morally to seek confirmation of this by giving money with my address and a firm date for repayment? I did so from time to time and never got money back, except once. This was from a craftsman who fell into difficulties through illness. I lent him money to get his tools out of pawn, and he did start repaying me: I am sure that he meant to run straight. But after a time

<sup>1</sup> An asylum inmate looking over the wall sees a fisherman watching his rod, and asks: "Have you caught anything, mate?" and gets the answer: "Not a bite." "How long have you been sitting there, mate?" "All day." "Come inside, mate."



## WHITECHAPEL TO FLEET STREET

I got the impression that he was coming to look on me as a permanent source of help. So for his own good, I turned hard.

In general I became convinced that casual charity was an evil of the same type as casual employment—evil as making possible an unworthy mode of life. There was in those days a dreadful place in Shadwell called Medland Hall; it was a free shelter opening each night at six, and one could see the down-and-outs queued up for hours beforehand to make sure of a place. There was free feeding on the Embankment at midnight; when later I became a leader-writer I used to come out from my work into a stream of lost creatures shambling to their food.

I was set to learn about charity in another form by going regularly to the office of the Charity Organisation Society in Whitechapel, then managed by an admirable secretary, Miss M. E. Marshall. I learned there how, by taking sufficient care, one could give real help to others. I came to say that the C.O.S. and the SOC. (i.e. the Socialists) were the front and back of the same coin. They ought to agree instead of quarrelling, because they were both against the half-measures whether of casual employment or of casual charity that fostered sub-human forms of life.

Toynbee Hall was a place of innumerable meetings. At one meeting, in support of a plan for curing drunkenness, I had the pleasure of hearing an absent-minded chairman call on a speaker, not to move a resolution, but—"for the toast." At another meeting, I had failed to provide an audience of more than three for a very distinguished speaker—Mrs. May Tennant of the Factory Department—but with perfect good humour she carried on as if it didn't matter at all; she gave an example of good manners and of kindness to a young man which he never forgot. Of another meeting—a conference on underfed children—I reported to my mother "a regular torrent of speakers . . . on every conceivable subject under the sun—except the subject of how to feed underfed school children."

June 12, 1904.

Most of the speakers by way of practical suggestions for the feeding of underfed school children demanded housing reform or the repudiation of the national debt or the resuscitation of the school board or indiscriminate outdoor relief of paupers!!! . . . I myself as Canon Barnett's mouthpiece contributed the one relevant speech among the later speakers; that is to say I put forward, since Canon Barnett himself being in the chair could not do so, his own scheme of providing a free breakfast of porridge and milk and treacle to every child at

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eight in the morning and severely punishing the parents of all children who should neither avail themselves of this nor feed the children properly themselves. But really I don't want anything done at all by the State. Many children of course are quite unable to profit by their education because physically unfit by under-feeding, but I would rather let charity come in as a present palliative and reorganise society if necessary as a complete remedy. Granted that many parents have now the responsibility of feeding their children without the power of doing so (through low wages) the remedy is not to remove the responsibility but to give the power.

Every now and again I did something quite different. I was called to the bar in November 1904 and reported to my mother the backchat between Mr. Justice Grantham and the senior called—Berriedale Keith. I lunched with a contemporary of Balliol days whom I described as being now “journalist politician and general manipulator of too many irons in the fire.”

. . . One of the clever young men of whom one dare not predict success not through any doubt of his abilities but simply because his capacity for sincerity is not proved. It may be there or it may not. It's an enormously interesting speculation among a lot of (roughly) equally clever and ambitious young men of whom some must (one thinks) come to greatness to guess which it is and whether (as one hopes) time and work will show the true man from the merely ambitious one.

I dined with friends in Hampstead and claimed to have shown histrionic ability in the acting of book-names:

September 15, 1903.

Our masterpiece was three bricklayers who solemnly laid one brick (represented by a book) and then having spent some time in admiration and conversation and newspaper reading departed; that of course was *The Day's Work*.

I joined the London School of Economics as an occasional student and in that capacity was invited by the Students' Union of those days—a small and very serious body—to read a paper to them on “The Influence of University Settlements.” I chose perversely to present my paper as a study of the influence of settlements on the settlers, whom I described as the inmates. It was long before I dared to show this effusion to the Canon.

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But thirty years later, when I had become immersed in University education, I claimed that there was more truth than perversity in what I had said in 1905. "A University Settlement is or should be less a place of permanent residence than a college to pass through; it should be a school of post-graduate education in humanity."<sup>1</sup>

I went to College Meetings in Oxford and helped as a rule to postpone all postponable and unpostponable business; I used to come away reflecting on the merciful providence that made Colleges immortal. This alone gave hope that they might get something settled before they died. But I did have some success in stiffening the College to fight the City of Oxford for the right to build a bridge over Logic Lane. The City claimed that, by Royal Charter, the soil of every highway in the City belonged to them, so that, though we owned the land on each side of Logic Lane, we could bridge the lane only with their consent and on payment to them. We produced our bursar's account from the sixteenth century recording payment of a shilling for "painting ye poste in Logic Lane." This showed, we said, that we had the right since time immemorial to block traffic down the lane by a post; it could not be a highway under the Royal Charter, and the general rule that owners of land on each side of a road owned the subsoil of the road applied to us. We won on that. The City had to pay our heavy costs. The post was put up ceremoniously thereafter for one day every year.

I took part with Harry Tawney, Richard Livingstone and others in a campaign for reforming the ancient Universities. This was one of the Canon's side-shows; he got the *Westminster Gazette* to print a series of articles by Tawney over the pseudonym Lambda. As part of this campaign, just after I had joined the *Morning Post*, I offered to return my prize fellowship stipend to my College to be used for specified reforms. But the Fellows in the main were not reformers. They said it was open to me to surrender the stipend but that they would decide then what, if anything, to do with it. I decided that the money would be more useful if I kept it.

I went to a College Gaudy and reported the Master of University as making an excellent speech: "He is another of these people who are far more sagacious and entertaining than his books."

I found time for reading books myself. I discovered *Typhoon* "by one Joseph Conrad" and recommended it to my mother, particularly the second story. I wrote screeds to her about Stevenson's Letters and

<sup>1</sup> *London Mercury*, June 1935, in a review of a book by J. A. R. Pimlott on *Toynbee Hall* (Dent, 1935).

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Samuel Butler and George Meredith. I told her at the same time that I had fallen a victim to Mayzipop, "a glorious crackly sweet that you can buy—in enormous quantities for a penny—at all the street corners."

Meredith even more than Mayzipop was the delight of my youth. A little before I had told my sister, after reading *Sandra Belloni*, that it left me with the miserable thought that when I had read everything of Meredith's there would be nothing still to read that I could enjoy so much.

I took many Whitsun and August holiday walks over the Lakeland Hills, generally with my sister. There were no youth hostels then, and no camping. But the return fares—for sitting hard all night—were incredibly cheap and inns always had room. £5 covered both of us for the week.

I went to Oxford for other reasons than College Meetings or Gaudies. Having heard my friend Garrod read a theological paper, I passed on my own views to my mother.

November 19, 1904.

I am afraid I don't yet think life would be a poor affair if this world be all; I am content to believe this life to be all we can be sure of, to believe in immortality as the prophetic consciousness in supreme moments of one's continued activity through one's surviving works, and to construe love as the duty of continuing the best of those we have known as a living influence in our own and, through us, in other lives.

Having to speak at Toynbee meetings, I talked less about Toynbee Hall than about the general aims of settlements.

November 28, 1904.

I came to the conclusion that such places represent simply a protest against the sin of taking things for granted, in particular taking one's own social position or conditions for granted. No man can really be a good citizen who goes through life in a watertight compartment of his own class, i.e. in my case of less than a fifth of the state to which I belong. Toynbee Hall produces therefore a sort of general culture in political and social views; it doesn't necessarily lead all men to one particular view. One man might return from it a convinced aristocrat, feeling that for the mass of people no life beyond that of toil and the simplest domestic affections was possible, and that the ideal state was a state of the cultured few based on the toil of many. Another might return thinking all conscious reform of others, by state or

## WHITECHAPEL TO FLEET STREET

individuals, a disastrous fostering of the feebles who ought to die, an interference with the beneficent laws of nature. Another might become violently socialistic. But in each case I think they would at least understand their own views better. The aristocrat would understand what aristocracy means; the democrat would know the limits and dangers of democracy; the individualist the price to be paid for individualism and *laissez-faire*; the socialist would know the possibilities and limits of successful interference. One might not become a specialist in any one social subject; one would at least be in a position, having seen all sorts and conditions of men, to have reasonable views on all social proposals. A protest against taking the structure of society for granted; the structure may be good or bad—one mustn't take it for granted. I feel that I have really got hold of rather a satisfactory phrase.

My story came round always in the end to Toynbee Hall. Every day and evening there I was learning—finding out how to do without instruction things that I had never done before; finding out about human nature; discovering myself through the eyes of others. The Bishop of Stepney, with whom I had many talks about unemployment and other matters, remarked to the Canon once that I would go very far if only I could conceal from my interlocutors how foolish I thought them; this remark was faithfully passed on to me by the Canon. By way of contributing to the educational programme at Toynbee I took, in my first winter there, a class in Greek, working through the New Testament. But after a few weeks I lost half of my class of two. I had been applying to him what I thought to be the Socratic method, of asking him questions and causing him thus to discover his mistakes for himself. He said he had not come to me to be made a fool of. Which, after all, was the final judgment of the Athenians about Socrates.

I did not confine my educational efforts to teaching Greek. Maynard and Tawney and I gave two whole series of lectures, first on industrial questions and then on political questions. The concluding lecture of this second course was on "The Real Governors of England." Maynard and I decided by a majority of two to one that Tawney must give this lecture.

Nor was my lecturing confined to Toynbee Hall. There was in those days an organisation known as the Social and Political Educational League which invited speakers to offer lectures, without fee and with no expenses paid, and circulated the resulting list of offers to likely audiences. I offered three subjects: Unemployment, Socialism and Wordsworth.

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I had to wait nearly fifty years—till the Centenary Celebration at Ambleside—for an audience on Wordsworth. For Socialism and Unemployment I had many rises.

The last of these, particularly in the form of an appeal to establish labour exchanges and organise the reserve of labour, became my principal subject in public addresses and in private conversation. R. L. Stevenson's Lecturer at Large had nothing on me. Joseph Finsbury of *The Wrong Box* was prepared to travel thirty miles to address an infant school. By my twenty-sixth birthday, so long as I was allowed to lecture on labour exchanges, neither distance nor audience mattered to me. My high-water mark in this game was a mass meeting of employers and workmen in a large hall in Poplar. The meeting consisted of the Secretary of the Poplar Trades Council, who, being lame, could not get away. But the local Press was there in force and several columns of my speech were printed.

A year from my first contact with unemployment through the Mansion House Relief Fund, I was becoming known to experts in this field.

December 10, 1904.

I had a long talk with Professor Ashley on Thursday about careers. He was certain that I must write a book on the "Unemployed"; also notes for economic journals.

Soon after I supported the Canon at the House of Commons in addressing a meeting of Liberal Members on unemployment. Herbert Asquith was in the Chair and, in a letter to my mother, I calculated the 60 or 70 Members present as representing in their constituents an audience of 150,000 to 200,000 electors, or 700,000 men, women and children. Alas! the division bell rang as the Canon was answering questions; not more than 90,000 people in the persons of their Members returned to listen to me. I had an early lesson on the difficulty of combining political life with serious study of social problems.

As I got deeper into unemployment, I became absorbed by it and became less and less of a Sub-Warden. In July 1905 the Charity Organisation Society set up a Committee on Unskilled Labour which became in the main a study of casual employment in the London Docks. With the Canon's approval, I served as Secretary to the Committee and drew my £200 a year from it rather than from Toynbee Hall. By August 1905 I was planning to leave Toynbee Hall altogether, hiving off from it into East London, as other residents had done or thought of doing. I had

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looked longingly at some of the houses by the dock entrances built originally by the dock companies for their officials; the river is the one element of romance in that dreary sprawl of London. Now my plan for hiving off became definite. I had got to know well one of the curates of the parish of Poplar, T. C. Witherby. He and I arranged to live together in Ottawa Buildings near the north end of Blackwall Tunnel; rented three dwellings for our joint use; ordered the telephone and so on. Tawney at one time planned to come there too. I still have the plan of the dwelling that I took. As Witherby had written to me from a visit to settlements in the United States, we were to be an offshoot of Toynbee.

Witherby actually moved to Ottawa Buildings, I believe during October 1905. But before I could follow him, my future was changed by a talk with Fabian Ware of the *Morning Post*.

October 25, 1905.

I saw today by appointment Fabian Ware, who has just come back to edit the *Morning Post*. I thought he might be going to ask me to do him a few articles on the Unemployed. He did ask me to come on the staff completely—in order to undertake all the articles and leaders on social questions! I told him of course that in party politics I was certainly not a Conservative and that in speculative politics I was a bit of a Socialist. He rather liked that than the reverse.

I told him also that I wasn't a journalist; he said there was no such thing as a journalist, that it was all practice. I told him I thought myself to be by nature a scholar or scientist (which indeed I am). We agreed that clearly I was not going to be a journalist by profession (writing on anything and everything) but must write always on my own interests.

Now what do *you* think of it?

What it will mean in time—beyond I suppose three or four articles or short leaders a week—depends largely on myself; and the pay depends upon that too. I haven't yet asked about the pay (but of course it would keep me well) because I wanted to decide on principle. It would work in perfectly with Oxford or London lecturing—I am going to be a professor some day. Shortly: It's a great opportunity to preach to the comfortable classes doctrine which they wouldn't stand for a moment in the *Daily News* or the *Daily Chronicle*.

It was a flattering approach. I went about feeling like a beggar-boy who had just been proposed to by a Queen. I found that the Canon had

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had nothing to do with the affair. The story, as told to me by Spenser Wilkinson (for many years chief leader-writer on the *Morning Post*), was that on Ware's behalf he went to Oxford to smell out likely young men. The Master of Balliol, having put first on the list for social questions myself and Tawney, had a qualm as to our proving congenial to the *Morning Post*: "I am not sure that either Beveridge or Tawney are Conservatives." He was told that this was not a *sine qua non*, and the proposition was made to me. But, before the affair was clinched, I had a dinner and long talk with Spenser Wilkinson, for him to see how he would like me and for me to learn what I was in for, in the way of expressing or suppressing my opinions. He told me that the saving grace of the *Morning Post* was that its proprietor—Lord Glenesk—was a business man wanting to sell the paper; he was a Conservative second to that. I should help to sell the paper by writing with conviction what I believed. I should not help to sell it by writing Conservative stuff to order.

Though the Canon had played no part in Ware's offer, he welcomed it warmly as good for the readers of the *Morning Post*, and after a little consideration thought it prudent for me.

October 27, 1905.

Of course I go into the lion's den and may have to retreat through mutual incompatibility, but then Mr. Ware is in something the same position himself. He will back me.

Therefore I have practically made up my mind to try it, but have first written to get some idea of the terms. The Canon thinks it means £500 a year. (Don't be excited by this, it's probably much less.) When I get something definite I can make a proposal to do as little as I like (say three nights a week instead of four) for less money.

So I wrote Ware one or two trial leaders, one of which on the London Unemployed Fund (on November 16) found favour in exactly the right quarter, i.e. with the proprietor of the paper—Lord Glenesk. He wrote to the Editor to say it was very good and to ask who wrote it. Thus the issue was settled. I resigned the Sub-Wardenship at the end of November.

In this Toynbee period I met for the first time three people or rather three sets of people to whom I was to owe much through most of my life.

There was Hubert Llewellyn Smith, then rising to be permanent head of the Board of Trade. He had been a Toynbee resident in 1888-89. As soon as I began to get excited about dock labour and decasualisation, the Canon got him down for a long evening's talk. I remember the Canon's comment next day on the generosity with which this desperately



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busy man had given to us of his time and had unrolled his mind Llewellyn Smith became my official chief in the Board of Trade and Ministry of Munitions for eight critical years from 1908 to 1916; many plans were hatched while I played with his children on his lawn at Ashtead.

There were—or was—Sidney and Beatrice Webb. I met them first I think late in 1904, when, among other things, I sought advice about a pamphlet on labour exchanges. They did not like me then, but I met them again in July 1908, still through the Toynbee connection, for a week-end with them, C. F. G. Masterman and others at Cyril Jackson's home in Limpsfield, and I pleased the Webbs better than before "in the torrent of discussion between Masterman, Beveridge and ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

Beveridge, an ugly mannered but honest, self-devoted, hard-headed young reformer of the practical type, came out well in comparison with Masterman; and from disliking him, as we had formerly done because of his ugly manners, we approved him. There was no hope of the Liberal Party in either of these young men; but intense dislike of the Tories and the usual anger with Balfour for remaining in.<sup>1</sup>

The Webbs came into my story thereafter for forty years.

There were finally my cousin David Beveridge Maif and Jessy Mair and their children. David, then Chief Examiner in the Civil Service Commission, wrote to me out of the blue, I think early in 1904, to say that though cousins did not necessarily like one another, from what he had heard of me, he thought we might take the risk of meeting. So I went to the small house in which they were living in Banstead. That was the beginning of many happy activities together for all of us. How Jessy Mair worked with me in one thing after another till in 1942 she became Janet Beveridge is told elsewhere in this volume and in hers.

My decision to go whole-time to Toynbee Hall involved painful disagreement with my parents. But my mother began soon to enjoy my encounters and experiences with me and to give me her blessing again. Three months after I had begun my new life she came to visit Toynbee Hall, talked to the Canon and was talked to by him. I followed this visit by a birthday letter.

December 13, 1903.

My dearest Mother,

I am afraid I am a day late with my birthday wishes though not in my birthday thoughts, for it was only an abnormal pressure of

<sup>1</sup> *Our Partnership*, by Beatrice Webb, p. 309 (Longmans, Green and Co., 1948).

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occupations, not forgetfulness, that delayed my writing. I feel that I ought to say something to you this time—for in the past year I think I have tested to the utmost your power and willingness to sympathise with me, and I have found my mother still young, still able to grow with me, still as much my mother and the most wonderful woman in the world, now that I am something approaching a man, as she was my mother and a providence when I looked up to her as a child. I don't know if this all sounds cold and formal; I am thinking about how I once said to A. C. C. how the beginning of disillusionment was when inevitable growth made one see that one's parents were not angels (to which he replied that he still thought his mother one)—now I know what mothers (and fathers) may become when they cease to be the angelic providences of our childhood, and that the change may be for the better rather than for the worse. But I don't think anyone else but my own father and my own mother would be good enough to convince me of this last part; I include my father because though I am not sure that he yet agrees with my present means of life, I am sure he does with the end. So I will wish you all possible good wishes for your birthday—at which I feel your age is exactly twenty-four!

To this my mother answered that all was now well between us: "Go on! with my blessing for a long spell of this other education, but not for too long."

My father took longer to convince. But he too came round with a characteristic gesture—a birthday present of £20 to allow me to take lessons in elocution. I duly did this, in the main by mouthing Clarence's dream in *Richard III*:

. . . ; then came wandering by  
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair  
Dabbled in blood, and he squeaked out aloud,  
"Clarence is come—false, fleeing, perjured Clarence,  
That stabbed me in the field by Tewksbury:  
Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments!"

I am glad to carry this speech about with me always. What else I gained by elocution lessons I am not sure.

It was to my father, not my mother, that I gave, exceptionally, the official news about the *Morning Post*.

Toynbee Hall gave me everything that my parents could have desired

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for me of launching on a career. Whether I gave to Toynbee Hall all that the Canon desired of me is another question. I think now that I did not do so. As soon as my appointment had been made he wrote, in May 1903, asking me if I could do something to get some men to begin residence with me in the coming autumn. In his first letter from Italy, in January 1904, he returned to this theme:

I am writing to you about unemployed and L.C.C. but I don't forget that our—yours and mine—concern is the House. . . . The Founders' Day meeting ought to be useful in enlisting men and perhaps a visit by you to the Universities would not be wasted. You said you wished advice from me. All I can say I have said and that is "Remember to strengthen the House." I was always struck by the way Jowett remembered Balliol; whatever he undertook in public and for the public, he always made it tend to the glory of the college. So it seems to me that for the sake of the future—whatever be the object for what it may be used—the House should be strengthened.

The number of new residents entering Toynbee Hall in my first year, 1903, was the largest since 1889 and remained at a higher level for a good many more years to come. But I cannot attribute any of these recruits to my own persuasion. I have never found it easy to ask anyone—man or woman—to do things, even things that they desired to do. I was not, I think, a sufficiently good mixer of others to do for the House what the Canon desired.

But the Canon was a wise old bird. He knew that men should be used for what they can do best, not for what they cannot do well if at all. He realised almost at once that I was not the stuff of which a Warden could be made. He imported Edmund Harvey as Deputy Warden in July 1904—to succeed himself as Warden two years later. He let me go my own gate, with all the help in his power, with introductions to get me going, and always with admirable advice. After two months of the Mansion House Fund of 1903-04, I resigned from the Committee because of what I thought a misuse of funds. The Canon's gentle comment made me feel that I would never again resign from anything by way of protest:

As a general rule I have found resignation a mistake. The act may enable one to keep one's own garments unspotted, but it does not advance general cleanliness. I have always regretted my own resignations and have been more satisfied when I clung on till the

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minority became strong. But I don't deny that resignation may be the only protest and I have not the knowledge necessary to criticise your act.

This letter encouraged me to stick at least to all the local work of dealing with the unemployed and to the important investigation that followed.

The Canon had with him another creature of equal force. As curate of a fashionable church in Kensington he had been offered the vicarage of St. Jude's at the moment when he and Henrietta Rowland, devoted to country pursuits and pleasures, were coming together. So he took Henrietta to look at Whitechapel and she decided then and there both that she would marry him and that he must accept the offer. It is a heartening story of young courage. We young people of the Canon's House often spoke irreverently of Henrietta, but our irreverence was a cloak for profound respect.

The Canon was an infinitely wise creature, with a strong temper controlled and directed by love of God and love of man. The strength of the House that he founded was that it could use many different sorts of people and could and did give to everyone an opportunity of work and happiness that he would have missed otherwise.

## Chapter III

### FLEET STREET AND SO TO WHITEHALL

I always make a note of the occasions on which I descend or ascend into pure journalism—viz. laying down of strong views on a subject which doesn't matter and about which I care little and know less.

Letter to my mother, March 21, 1907.

MY appointment to the *Morning Post* coincided with another change of activities. In the letter reporting to my mother Lord Glenesk's approval of one of my first leaders, I told her of a second event "eminently satisfactory to your son."

November 20, 1905.

I have just been co-opted a member of the Central Body for dealing with the Unemployed throughout London. Moreover I have been co-opted at the head of the poll with W. Crooks (the Labour Member for Woolwich) and above the Mayor of Westminster (Lord Cheylesmore), the late Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies (Sir E. Brabrook), Keir Hardie, M.P. and various other reverend seniors. This result is due to the fact that I was put forward I believe both by the C.O.S. and the Socialists!

Through this co-option I returned to practical dealing with the unemployed. I continued at the same time to study the problem of unemployment and to prepare, largely in alliance with Sidney and Beatrice Webb, an assault on the authorities able to promote fundamental treatment of the problem; as it was this that led to my next move, from Fleet Street to Whitehall, it is dealt with near the end of this chapter. Meanwhile I found in the *Morning Post*, not only means of earning my living while keeping the day free for myself, but occasion for commenting on all the social problems of the time and seeking to promote social reform in many fields. The present chapter falls into several sections. There is the new *Morning Post* of Fabian Ware; the Central Unemployed Body for London; the Social Problems of 1905-14 as reflected in the *Morning Post*; the Campaign for Security by Social Insurance; the Campaign for Labour Exchanges; and at the end a Question for Reformers.

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### 1. *The "Morning Post" of Fabian Ware*

My new place of earning my living was metaphorically in Fleet Street but physically in Aldwych. During the eighteen-eighties the Metropolitan Board of Works and its successor the London County Council cleared away a maze of courts and narrow streets round Drury Lane, to make room for what is now Aldwych and Kingsway. Fortunately, Charles Booth began his inquiry before the clearance; conveniently the clearance was far advanced before he published his results. For a large part of the Drury Lane area he was able to describe house by house the kind of people who had lived there and the way in which they had lived; he gave a picture of squalor, degradation and vice as vivid as anything in our language.<sup>1</sup>

In 1905 reconstruction of this area was far from accomplished. The *Morning Post* was housed temporarily in wooden sheds north of the eastern half of Aldwych: a new permanent office was under construction at the western end of Aldwych, nearly opposite the Gaiety Theatre. I wrote my first leaders in the wooden sheds, looking across Houghton Street to the site which Sidney Webb had persuaded the County Council to lease for no rent to the London School of Economics and Political Science: "We will cover it with buildings for you," he promised. Fifteen years later, as Director of the School, I began my co-operation with Sidney in fulfilling his promise.

It added to my sense of adventure in joining the Tory camp of the *Morning Post* to be working in a shed. It was an adventure not for me alone but for Fabian Ware and for many of my colleagues. Ware, beginning as a schoolmaster, had gone to South Africa as one of Milner's young men in 1901, and had become Director of Education in the Transvaal. He came to the *Morning Post* in 1905, after an interregnum in which the chief leader-writer Spenser Wilkinson had acted as Editor. He found a strangely old-fashioned concern. Through the kindness of his widow, Lady Ware, I have been able to use his own words, from a letter to Lord Glenesk in May 1906, describing some of the things that he found and the changes that he made. The quotations just below come from this letter.

There were, for instance, no salaried leader-writers; there was a band of individuals each waiting on the Editor each night in the hope of

<sup>1</sup> See *Life and Labour in London* (Macmillan, 1891), Vol. 2, pp. 46 seq., for description of Macklin Street, Shelton Street and Parker Street, running out of Drury Lane to the east.

## FLEET STREET TO WHITEHALL

employment, and of payment by number of words they were allowed to write.

There were no pensions for the staff; instead, men once taken on were apt to stay till they died. Ware, as he told the proprietor, "found it necessary to master a regular mythology of minor divinities created by the old traditions." "It is magnificent but it is not business. I will take an example. The Art Critic is, I believe, actually bedridden. At any rate I have never seen him. He draws his salary and farms out the work. He does this with discrimination and consequently the articles which he sends in are good. But he breaks the first condition which should attach to such service and that is regular attendance at the office."

There was no intelligence branch to help those writing for the paper with documents, books, facts and references. "So long as we had more time for the preparation of our paper than other offices, it was possible to unearth a book in an uncatalogued and unclassified library, or even to purchase a book or paper required. But now that we are working at the same pressure as other papers, these unbusinesslike and extravagant methods are fortunately rendered impossible."

Fabian Ware came to the *Morning Post* as a new broom. He did not feel able to replace the band of nightly applicants for leader-writing space by a salaried staff. But he reduced the waiting<sup>g</sup> band, changed almost completely the persons composing it, and guaranteed a livelihood to those whose regular attendance he desired. My piece-rate, for instance, was three guineas for a column of about 1,100 words, and half of this for a half-column. I presented myself in the Editor's room each night at about 10 p.m. (later 9 p.m.) to see if he wanted me that night. Sometimes the answer was easy. If one of my range of subjects was in the news, through a Parliamentary debate or a public report, I would start at once on a column or half a column. On the other hand, the answer might be: "Nothing for you tonight; we're full up." Or my employment might depend on my suggesting a subject, which the Editor would weigh against other subjects, for a column or half a column. I was a casual employee, like the dockers or the bricklayers of whom I had written so much. But my casualness was mitigated in two ways. A few of us only had the entry to the Editor's room; we were not liable to be displaced without warning by an invader from some other paper or occupation. And I had a verbal undertaking from Ware that I should be allowed to fill not less than three columns a week; the nights when no leader was required of me could often be put to account by writing a special article or review. In practice, in one way or another, I filled nearly four columns

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a week, yielding an income of £600 a year earned by working 10 to 11 hours each week. A column leader came to take about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, after which I had to wait as a rule for another half-hour for the last proofs to come. Allowing for this I put my normal rate of earning at 288d. per hour. I reckoned myself as equivalent to  $27\frac{1}{2}$  London bricklayers, with their hourly rate then of  $10\frac{1}{2}$ d.

The range of subjects allotted to me was wide. It included all the main social problems of the day—unemployment, sweating, housing, town planning and London traffic, local government and its finance, trade union law, old age pensions, the liquor trade, the feeding of school-children, infant mortality, and so on.

But in addition to problems of this kind, many other things came my way. Party political issues, between Liberals and Conservatives, such as the House of Lords or the Budget or Tariff reform, I was not allowed to touch. But on the political portent of the Labour Party, on payment of Members, and on votes for women I was free to try to form the mind of the Conservative Party, if I knew my own mind. In April 1907 all America became my province and I was the paper's authority also on France. Beyond this I dealt at need with subjects as variegated as the San Francisco Earthquake, the Eisteddfod, Vivisection, the Progress of Astronomy, Juvenile Smoking, Musical Copyright, the South African War Stores Scandal, Keats and Shelley Memorials, the Coronation of King Haakon, Reform of the Ancient Universities, and the Channel Tunnel. The last of these prompted an outburst to my mother, and a definition of journalism which I exhumed with apologies to the Fourth Estate.

March 21, 1907.

I have just—may I be forgiven for it—perpetrated a leader on the Channel Tunnel—a subject of which I am colossally ignorant, but then it had to be written about and our military expert is away. Moreover the Editor turned up at 10.30 p.m. So I wrote about three-quarters to one column in just over the hour. I always make a note of the occasions on which I descend or ascend into pure journalism—viz. laying down strong views on a subject which doesn't matter and about which I care little and know less.

The adverse views which I expressed on the Channel Tunnel in my leader were those which I thought appropriate to the absent Military Expert. It was about this time that Ware reported to our proprietor that "Mr. Beveridge . . . is rapidly learning the art of leader-writing."



## FLEET STREET TO WHITEHALL

It was small wonder that, after a month or so, the Editor desired my attendance every night. This involved reconsideration of my plans for leaving Toynbee Hall. At first, even after joining the *Morning Post*, I still meant to try Blackwall: " . . . I can't cut myself off from reality by living in the Temple just yet and I don't want to go into a strange part of London." So I wrote to my mother in March 1906. But common sense prevailed at last, even at twenty-seven years of age. I could not make my way in the middle of every night from Aldwych to Blackwall Tunnel. I stayed on at Toynbee Hall for a while, with special dispensation from the requirement to begin breakfast before 9 a.m.

My time of attendance in Aldwych at first was 10 or 10.30, with the paper going to press at 2.0 a.m. But in June 1906 the *Daily Mail* decided that it must be part of every Briton's breakfast if he desired this, and began to go to press earlier. All other morning papers in London had to follow suit. Our going to press hour became 1.0 in place of 2.0 a.m. and my times at the office became 9 or 9.30 to 11.30. The change meant that I could no longer go to dinner-parties; on the other hand I reached bed an hour or more than an hour earlier, finding more trains to catch. For a young man who wanted to work at unemployment all day, either practically on the Central Unemployed Body for London or by writing a book about it, the change of hours was an advantage.

Every now and again I got off by special devices. One summer night, having done my stint at the office, I travelled back to Toynbee Hall, wrote another leader there, and at 5 a.m. walked through the City and over Westminster Bridge (reciting Wordsworth) to Waterloo for the first train to Hindhead. Thereafter I bicycled all day and danced all night.

I discovered before long another region of London where the Poor Law Guardians were by repute as well worth joining by a reformer in search of trouble as were the Guardians of Poplar or of West Ham, then subject to John Burns's pogrom of inquiries. This was the Borough of Lambeth, extending from near Westminster to Brixton. At the beginning of 1907 I left Toynbee Hall and established myself in a four-room flat overlooking Vauxhall Park and the statue of Fawcett, the blind Postmaster-General, which adorned the Park. I had an early intimation of the reputation of some of my neighbours, when I found myself unable to buy meat from the butcher except for cash; the butcher said he had already lost as much as he could afford by sending joints to Park Mansions on credit. I had another light on my neighbours, or some of them, when after a shopping expedition near Oxford Circus under guidance of a lady

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friend, I hailed a hansom cab to drive us to my home for tea and began to explain to the cabby just where Park Mansions could be found. The cabby said he didn't need instruction; he smiled knowingly at my companion and said he knew all about Park Mansions, Lambeth. He obviously thought my companion was a lady friend in the technical sense. I began to feel that, though I had left Toynbee Hall, I had not cut myself off from reality.

My project of reforming the Lambeth Guardians had to be abandoned when I joined the Board of Trade in July 1908. Park Mansions was abandoned early in 1911, so that I might share Dick Denman's house in Chelsea. Thereafter I lived for twenty-five years in one or other of the accepted homes of the London intelligentsia—in Chelsea or in Kensington—going to my daily work in Whitehall or its war-time substitutes or in Houghton Street off Aldwych. By the time I abandoned Kensington for the Temple again in 1936, I calculated that I had spent three years out of my life in the worst form of tiring idleness—in travel to and from my work, sitting or strap-hanging.

### 2. *Central Unemployed Body for London*

The Central (Unemployed) Body for London—familiarily the C.U.B.—was established under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905. It consisted of two representatives from each of the Distress Committees appointed in the twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs, with a sprinkling of co-opted and nominated members and representatives of the L.C.C. and the City of London. It was not an important body and most of the Members of Parliament on it dropped off after a year.

The C.U.B. was the statutory successor of the London Unemployed Fund Committee established in 1904 under the scheme for unemployed relief introduced by Mr. Walter Long as President of the Local Government Board. The C.U.B. was designed as a means of relieving the unemployed in a period of trade depression, without recourse to the Poor Law.<sup>1</sup> Two of its members—George Lansbury and I—each saw in it an opportunity of doing something different and of airing pet schemes of our own. My pet was labour exchanges; George Lansbury's pet was "Back to the Land."

By March 1906 I had persuaded the C.U.B. to set up, at the cost of the rates, a system of exchanges covering the whole of London, and I

<sup>1</sup> In *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, pp. 161-90, I described the work of the C.U.B. and its predecessor of the London Unemployment Fund at some length.

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became Chairman of its Employment Exchanges Committee. I had the luck to find on the C.U.B., as a representative of the London County Council, one of the early enthusiasts for the labour exchange idea, Nathaniel Cohen. He was the founder, by a voluntary action, of the first public labour bureau in this country—at Egham, 1885. He was father also of a Balliol friend of mine, and as such well disposed to my schemes and myself.

George Lansbury became Chairman of the Working Colonies Committee. The "colony" scheme, as has been told in the previous chapter, had been invented by Canon Barnett for the Mansion House Fund of 1903-04. It consisted of offering work with board and lodging in the country, while maintaining the families of men in their own homes; it substituted a "rustication test" of genuine need for the old workhouse test. This, of course, was not Lansbury's interest at all. For him the attraction of the colony lay in the hope that, after a period of country work and training, unemployed men could be settled permanently on the land, in small holdings if no other opening arose. Among the several colonies established or used by the C.U.B. he gave most time to Hollesley Bay. This was an estate on the Suffolk coast, once used as a Colonial College—an institution in which young gentlemen wishing or required by their families to emigrate used to receive a preliminary course of theoretical and practical instruction in agricultural pursuits. The College fell on evil times and was closed, till Mr. Joseph Fels, an American millionaire and enthusiast for "back to the land," bought it and leased it in 1905 at a nominal rent to the Executive Committee of the London Unemployed Fund of 1904-05, as a farm colony for the unemployed. The C.U.B. under Lansbury's leadership took it over and used it to capacity. The ninety young gentlemen for export were replaced by 300 of the London unemployed.

Lansbury and I, each with a mission of his own, each regarded the mission of the other with friendly scepticism. Lansbury did not believe in labour exchanges. "The unemployed are unemployed simply because there is not enough work to go round. . . . The only way out is the Socialist way out, namely production by the State for use." So he wrote to me in February 1907. It took Webb to persuade Lansbury two years later sign the Minority Report of the Royal Commission going hot and strong for labour exchanges. I did not believe in "back to the land" for the unemployed, most of whom had never been on the land; I doubted whether the colony system as practised at Hollesley Bay with its reliable dinner bell, billiard tables, regular hours for work each day, and a

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Saturday half-holiday, was good preparation for the inevitable hardships of agriculture in England or in Canada. I developed this theme in two articles in the *Morning Post* describing Hollesley Bay as I saw it in March 1906.<sup>1</sup>

Lansbury and I were both regarded with total rather than benevolent scepticism by the Minister in control of our work—John Burns at the Local Government Board. Burns remained obdurate against labour exchanges even after the Poor Law Commission had blessed them. He launched against Lansbury in 1907 an official inquiry into the behaviour of the Poplar Guardians.

Lansbury and I finally shared the unusual experience of finding ourselves attacked in a circular sent out to all members of the C.U.B. by its principal official—the Clerk; the attack was mainly on me as the most active of the Committee Chairmen but Lansbury came in for some of it as well. The details of this episode are not worth recording. But the episode taught me two lessons by which I hope that I profited.

The first lesson was that in printed controversy one should not be legalistic or take fine points. With the help of my friend and fellow lawyer Uthwatt I prepared and sent to all members of the C.U.B. a detailed answer to the Clerk's attack which largely failed of effect, and got some members arguing against me. I would have done better to send out nothing and to trust to the brief reprobation of the Clerk that was issued by the Chairman of the C.U.B., Russell Wakefield, later Bishop of Birmingham. In the end things went all right. The Clerk left very soon after. I became friends again with practically all the members and was co-opted once more at the head of the poll. But I passed through great mental agitation for a while.

The second lesson was that, if one has mental agitation, a walking tour is no cure for it. At the height of the trouble I went for ten days' walking on the hills of North Wales with my cousin David Mair. I discovered that one can walk all day and keep on thinking of one's troubles. Mere ridge-walking was not enough; if I had gone rock-climbing, I could not have thought about anything but how to keep alive and I could not have gone on talking. Poor David must have had a boring time. But he was a kindly creature. I reported to my mother a charming letter from him "arguing from my C.U.B. misadventure that I must be very like him."

I had come to know David and all his family in Toynbee Hall days. Co-option to the Central Unemployed Body brought me another lasting

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 2 (b).

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friendship. One of the representative members—from Chelsea—who had been advised by her C.O.S. friends to vote for me was Mrs. Rose Dunn-Gardner. She did so, though knowing nothing about me. Having done so she wrestled, as she said, for my soul with George Lansbury. She came to call herself my London mother.

She and her husband till his death had devoted their time largely to Charity Organisation in Lambeth, maintaining there by their service the tradition of unpaid secretaryship of the local C.O.S. Committee, long after it had been abandoned perforce in most other parts of London. In nursing her husband through his last illness she had strained her heart, and when I first met her she had become already an annual pilgrim to Bad Nauheim and the famous Dr. Schott. But when not at Nauheim or after-curing she gave all her energies to public service of one kind or another.

In relation to relief of the unfortunate she was a vigorous exponent of the doctrine of the C.O.S.; the unfortunate must be helped in a way to promote their return to independence; mere gifts of money were often the last things that they needed. Of a particular individual who had gone to the bad, she said to me once: "It takes a soul to save a soul." On this side of C.O.S. doctrine I went with her all the way and needed no rescue from George Lansbury. Casual alms and casual employment appeared to me equal evils, each an instrument for destroying character.

On the C.U.B. she became one of the most active members, particularly on the two Committees which were my chief interest, concerned with Employment Exchanges and Working Colonies. On the Employment Exchanges Committee she served under duress from me. The Working Colonies Committee introduced both of us to new country in more senses than one.

March 18, 1906.

. . . Yesterday I had a delightful outing to Garden City . . . going down as one of a sub-committee to report on the work being done there by a number of the London Unemployed for the Garden City Company. The rest of the sub-committee consisted of one—Mrs. Dunn-Gardner (of whom I have spoken before)—together with the Clerk; so we were able to arrive at a most unanimous and drastic report. But it is either very tragic or very absurd that the work we had to do yesterday should be entrusted to such people as ourselves—excellent economists and poor law guardians no doubt—but neither

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contractors nor hotel keepers. The unemployed are levelling a great space of ground for a future railway siding. We had

- (1) to report as to how the work was being done—about 30,000 cubic yards of earth;
- (2) to decide (on our own responsibility) whether we should undertake to do another 10,000 cubic yards at 11d. a cubic yard. (This involved deciding whether 11d. a cubic yard was a fair price—because of course we mustn't as a charitable body cut the market prices);
- (3) to decide how many men should be employed on the job—viz. 100 or 120 or 150;
- (4) to confirm or defer the appointment of the responsible superintendent;
- (5) to criticise the catering and prices paid, the sleeping accommodation, etc., etc.

And really I believe we were better qualified to do this than the rest of the committee would have been! Just think of a collection of small tradesmen, parsons, theorists (like me), poor law guardians, and enthusiasts running several enormous contractors' businesses (we have about 3,000 men employed), purchasing a farm and estate for £31,000 (at Hollesley Bay) and managing it. Our courage is simply gorgeous. And of course it's excellent practical training for me and the rest of us. . . .

The Central (Unemployed) Body was fun for a time. But I came to believe that nothing it did was worth doing—except labour exchanges. It provided me with the final argument for sustaining men in unemployment by insurance rather than by work manufactured for them, on a farm colony or elsewhere. When, in July 1908, I came to write to my mother about my departure to the Board of Trade, I added a gleeful postscript: "Just think of no more C.U.B.s but perhaps one!"

### 3. *Social Problems of 1905-14*

From the beginning of my connection with the *Morning Post* my mother added to her family duties the cutting out and pasting up of everything that I wrote there. The three large volumes of cuttings that she made present dramatically many contrasts between then and now.

There was no payment of Members of Parliament then. As was shown

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in a White Paper of June 1906, giving the results of inquiries in European countries and the United States, Great Britain in this agreed with Italy, Spain and Portugal and disagreed with all the rest. The *Morning Post* did not mind if Great Britain stood alone. After admitting, in one of my leaders, that arguments for and against payment of Members were nicely balanced, I tipped the balance by a final point against payment: "even if it be admitted that the hope of really disinterested service is a vain dream, still it may not be desirable for the State to acknowledge this in practice."

There were no votes for women then. It was the heyday of suffragist deputations and suffragette militance directed against a Government divided on the main issue and united only in evasions. The *Morning Post* took a line of detached observation which must have been equally infuriating to the militant suffragettes just come on the scene and to their "elder sisters" the respectable suffragists. Its leader-writer got as far as admitting that there was no reason why women, if they really wanted the vote, should not have it, as much as the men who had it now. But beyond that he was reduced to persiflage. He had on this issue personal reasons to walk warily. Both my mothers—on Hindhead and in London<sup>1</sup>—were women who experienced no difficulty in getting their own way without the vote and would have deprecated strong support of women's suffrage by me. My mother on Hindhead would have done more. She was engaged actively in mobilising anti-suffragist opinion and in persuading women to vote against having the vote. If she had found herself called on to cut out and paste up among my leaders a declaration in favour of any other kind of vote for women, her feelings would have been outraged. She would certainly have written a letter of protest for publication in the *Morning Post*, probably over her own name.

There was no aviation then in practice. I went to an aeronautical exhibition in April 1907 and began my leader on it with two sentences of which I was rather proud. "Of the making of flying machines there is no end. Of the making of machines that fly there is not yet a beginning."

... One after another the latest aeroplanes and mechanical birds were brought out by their fond inventors before the assembled crowd and told to fly. One after another they behaved like naughty children, and did anything and everything except what they were told. Some were merely obstinate; they did not move at all or moved only as far as the starter threw them in the first instance. Some were merely prudent and conservative; though ready to travel they preferred the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 47 line 5 for Rose Dunn-Gardner.

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established element and travelled enthusiastically along the ground. Some flew enough to be dangerous to the spectators nearest the starting point. One was positively malevolent and flew violently backwards at its maker. Two alone appear to have covered the course set for them and to have landed safely in the boundary net. The longest flight achieved in any case was under a hundred and fifty feet.

This leader ended with a solemn explanation of the almost insoluble difficulty of securing balance in the air. In the light of what happened almost at once the leader is now as laughable as the antics it laughed at.

There were no Trade Boards or minimum wage legislation to stop sweating and the Liberal Government proved backward in this field. The *Morning Post* threw itself whole-heartedly into the campaign of the National Anti-Sweating League, which organised exhibitions of sweated goods and promised a Bill of its own. A turning-point in the campaign was when the Government allowed the Bill to go to a Select Committee and the Committee proceeded to take evidence from Factory Inspectors.<sup>1</sup> At last the Government felt driven to act; the Trade Boards Bill became law in 1909.

In the two and a half years or so that I spent as leader-writer on the *Morning Post* from November 1905 to July 1908 I wrote for that paper about 600,000 words. On any subject of which I knew anything, I never wrote a word that I did not believe. And, with exceptions so few as to prove the rule, I never had a word struck out or a contribution rejected. Fabian Ware himself never changed a word that I had written. Once he added to one of my leaders an insult to the Liberal Government (I think on Sweating) to which I would hardly have objected. Once he omitted a short and silly leader, gloating over the losses incurred by investors in tube railways as the truest endowment of the public; but I found myself paid for this leader with the rest, so its omission may have been due to lack of space rather than to its demerits. Once he rejected an article on midnight feeding on the embankment, as being too hard-hearted. But the *Spectator*, to which, at his suggestion, I offered the article, also declined it.<sup>2</sup>

Once a leader of mine dealing with the "British Constitution Association"—the arch-individualists of that day—was expurgated, during

<sup>1</sup> Some of this evidence from the leader pages of the *Morning Post* of July 4, 1907, is printed in Appendix A, Section 2 (c).

<sup>2</sup> Extracts from it are given in Appendix A, Section 2 (d), as a picture of vanished degradation.



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Ware's absence, by the acting Editor. But the expurgation left enough to be shocking to conservatism as commonly conceived. After admitting that "the two or three distinct and to a large extent mutually inconsistent theories which pass under the name of Socialism" must be combated, the *Morning Post* repudiated the doctrine of the British Constitution Association that "the one and only rule of State policy is to make the incentive to individual efficiency as strong as possible" and proceeded to declare its own faith: "The one and only rule of State policy is to make a State worth living in for all who are accounted its members and to take whatever steps may prove necessary to that end." What more my leader would have said without expurgation is hard to imagine today.

This remarkable living together of a Radical leader-writer and a Tory paper was made possible in the main by delimitation of spheres of interest. I was not allowed to write on party issues like Chinese labour or the constitution and powers of the House of Lords, or Tariff Reform, though even on this last question, when the *Morning Post* appeared to me, as an unrepentant Free Trader, to talk more nonsense than usual, I was allowed to let off steam by letters to the Editor which he printed under a pseudonym. And during the General Election which followed hard on my appointment I took a holiday. The *Morning Post* in the course of the election could not praise anything that the Liberals said. But once the election was over, I returned, by writing in a Tory paper, to urge the Liberal Government on the Radical path. Nearly the first leader which I wrote on my return welcomed, as the outstanding feature of the election, the coming of the Labour Party. In view of later history it has seemed of interest to print again what the Tory *Morning Post* said about the Labour Party on February 1, 1906.<sup>1</sup>

Harmony between my new employers and myself was helped by luck. The first contentious measure of the Liberal Government on which I had to write was that dealing with the Taff Vale judgment of the House of Lords in 1901 which had made trade unions liable to be sued and their funds attached to pay the wrongful acts of their servants. On this I agreed with Sidney Webb and the Royal Commission of 1903 against outright reversal of the judgment. I thought that trade unions, instead of being placed again outside the law, should be brought within the law as responsible agents; I thought, as I think still, that power freed from responsibility to law is wrong. But the Liberal Government who started on this line were unable to hold to it; too many of their supporters had committed themselves in the General Election to outright reversal of the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 2 (a).

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House of Lords decision. The first Government Bill, preserving Taff Vale in principle, was replaced by a different Bill repealing it. So I was able to gratify the readers of the *Morning Post* by depicting the plight of the Liberal Government about trade union law with gleeful ridicule. But in spite of the Royal Commission, of the *Morning Post*, and of the Government's own original view, the Conservatives did not fight the Trade Disputes Bill tooth and nail. They let the third reading go without a division in the House of Commons—a clear hint to their friends in the Lords that they should let the Bill pass.

On another contentious issue—Liquor Licensing—I needed even greater luck. I had been convinced by Seeborn Rowntree in favour of disinterested management, that is to say of allowing the publican no financial motive to increase his sales of alcoholic drink. To open the way to disinterested management, it was essential for the State to recover unfettered control of licensing of public houses; this the Liberal Government proposed to do by fixing a time limit, at the end of which all licences should be at an end without further compensation. I was not prepared to compromise on a time limit in some form, with a view to disinterested management. I realised, as I wrote to my mother, that drink might be my ruin, that is to say, that disagreement with the Conservatives about liquor licensing might make my position on the *Morning Post* untenable.

Happily I enjoyed all the good fortune that I needed. My first bit of luck was in finding that my proprietor had no brewery shares and was strong on having a time limit for licences. My next bit of luck was when a leading Conservative, Bonar Law, in April 1908 came out in favour of disinterested management of public houses as "by far the most important reform which could be facilitated by legislation." Till then I had walked warily, putting my extreme views into special articles by a "Social Reformer"; I hoped that Bonar Law might have read them. Thereafter, both in leaders and in articles, I took the principle of the time limit as accepted, with only the question of length of limit for discussion—as between say fourteen years or twenty-one years or some other figure. And I came out whole-heartedly for disinterested management:

The interests established under the present licensing system are necessarily a barrier in the way of temperance; they are fetters upon every project of reform. . . . The ninety thousand licensed victuallers in England and Wales today are, look at the matter how one will, ninety thousand promoters of the drink traffic. To the perception of

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this fact is due the growing support accorded to the principle of disinterested management.

This is what a Conservative paper printed in its editorial columns on April 28, 1908.

My crowning mercy on the Licensing Bill was the decision of the Government to postpone its final stages to an autumn session. By the autumn of 1908 I had left the *Morning Post* for the Board of Trade. Otherwise drink would almost certainly have been my ruin. Fabian Ware had given me my head on Licensing in discussion. But when the question passed from discussion to voting in the House of Commons, and still more in the House of Lords, I find it hard to believe that the *Morning Post* would have been allowed to go on saying that all the Conservative votes were wrong and all the Liberal votes were right. For the Liberal Licensing Bill, with its time limit, was rejected in due course by the House of Lords.

As a Radical I felt at the time that, in surrendering on the Trade Disputes Bill, while fighting the Licensing Bill to its death, the Conservatives showed themselves more determined as defenders of property than as champions of political principle. Forty years later I found myself unexpectedly with the hope of trying disinterested management again—in New Towns. But this hope also has escaped me. The Labour Government by an Act of 1949 extended the Carlisle plan of disinterested management to the fourteen or fifteen New Towns. The Conservative Government of 1951 made repeal of this social experiment nearly the first of their Acts. They had forgotten Bonar Law.

Apart from my King Charles's head of unemployment and labour exchanges, two topics that recurred continually in my columns of the *Morning Post* were Town Planning and Old Age Pensions. The last of these calls for a special section; it led by revulsion to social insurance. The first of these, in view of later history, deserves some notice.

In Whitechapel nearly fifty years ago I used to wander through fetid air and numbing noise, trying to imagine how many miles in every direction I was from real country; once I walked out of London southwards to see for myself. And I knew that every day the distance was increasing. I used to dream of a super-millionaire who would buy a ring of land five miles broad all round London and forbid all further building in it; if London wished to go on growing, it must start again on the far side of the empty ring. Quite unknown to him, I cast Mr. Joseph Fels of Fels Naphtha Soap for the part of this benevolent plutocrat. But

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he was caught by George Lansbury instead for "back to the land." I had to content myself with investing a few pounds in the First Garden City at Letchworth, before I had any money to spare.

When I came to the *Morning Post*, I preached the doctrine of Garden Cities with a passion little less than that which I reserved for de-casualisation of dock labour:

. . . We are bound as a community to choose between having great central aggregations of factories, surrounded by workpeople making considerable journeys to and fro, and having our factories in small groups immediately surrounded by their working population, with the bulk of the necessary travelling falling upon the product, not on the producer. Judgment on such an issue cannot hesitate a moment. Though we must not let the thought of Garden City prevent us from taking in hand the essential reforms of our means of locomotion in London and elsewhere, we cannot doubt for a moment that Garden Cities rather than an ever-growing accumulation of monster suburbs should be our ideal.

This leader was printed on the same day as my welcome to the Labour Party, on February 1, 1906.

When the first Town Planning Act appeared in 1908, I welcomed it and stressed the need for haste: "Night and day towns are developing, and developing at present blindly and harmfully instead of by some reasoned plan." Alas! the Town Planning Act of 1908 did no more than nibble at the problem. What seemed so obvious to the young man seeking to influence opinion in 1906, did not appeal to anyone who had power then. On the issue posed in my leader of February 1, all persons with power gave without hesitation an answer opposite to mine. In place of new Garden Cities, there followed an ever-growing accumulation of suburbs to cities already monstrous. The 4,000,000 houses built between the two wars were allowed to be built largely in the wrong places. The New Towns Act of 1946 came forty years too late.

### 4. Campaign for Social Insurance

Security implies possession, as of right, of income sufficient for family needs at all times—both when the breadwinner of the family is earning and when he or she is unable to earn through causes beyond his control—sickness, infirmity, accident, unemployment, old age or death. Security is social when it is organised for all members of a society by the State,

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that is to say when steps are taken by the State to spread the income available for each family over times of earning by the breadwinner and of not earning alike, up to the minimum required to meet needs. Social insurance means that the spreading of the income is achieved not wholly by general taxation but in substantial part by contributions taken from earnings while they are being made.

The first steps towards social security, that is to say, ensuring of incomes as of right, by State action, during times of interruption or loss of earning, did not in Britain take the form of social insurance. The first step of all dealt with industrial accidents. The Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897, in a few trades regarded as specially dangerous, placed a liability on the individual employer, in case of an industrial accident, to pay a percentage of his wages to the injured workman so long as disability continued, or in the case of death a lump sum to the family. By an Act of 1906, provision for industrial accidents on broadly the same lines was extended to most wage-earners. The second step was concerned with old age. The Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 provided, from general taxation, pensions of 5s. a week at the age of seventy subject to a means test. Workmen's compensation and old age pensions both fell within my sphere at the *Morning Post*. Dealing with the second of them led me to campaign for contributory social insurance. •

Provision of pensions in old age had been the main practical reform advocated by Charles Booth as the result of his survey of poverty. He began in a paper read to the Royal Statistical Society in 1891, and met with a hostile reception by the statisticians. He persisted, however. His proposal boiled down to the giving of a pension at the cost of the taxpayer to every person, irrespective of class or wealth, who should have attained the age of sixty-five years. He rejected any means test.

The Conservative Governments of 1895 to 1905 did no more than refer the problem of old age to investigation by one Committee after another. The coming of the Liberal Government of 1905 stirred hopes, and in a debate on March 16, 1906, the principle of old age pensions was accepted platonically. But the cost of a non-contributory scheme was for those days alarming, £26,000,000 a year for a universal Charles Booth scheme, £10,000,000 for a scheme with a means test on New Zealand lines. On the other hand, a contributory scheme on German lines had been ruled out by all investigating Committees, as implying an amount of regulation and identification of individuals foreign to British habits.

In my first leader on this topic—on February 16, 1906—this exclusion

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of contributory insurance was accepted. For more than a year discussion of pensions disappeared from the columns of the *Morning Post*, as it did from Parliament. In the interval reflection on the cost of non-contributory pensions, combined with unrelenting opposition to any form of means test as a penalty on thrift, brought me to a change of attitude. I had begun to appreciate also the flexibility of the German system; it gave pensions not at a fixed age but at whatever age the need for them arose. By April 1907 I was suggesting that the advantage of compulsory insurance should be weighed once more in the balance against its alleged un-English character.

At the end of August 1907, I went to Germany with two objects in view: to supplement the argument for labour exchanges which I had submitted in my proof of evidence for the Royal Commission, by an account of the German labour exchanges, and to see for myself the German system of contributory insurance against sickness, infirmity and old age, and industrial accidents. I paid my own expenses, but covered them by writing seven articles for the *Morning Post* at five guineas each. I had a number of introductions from various sources; the most important was a letter to our Berlin Embassy from R. B. Haldane, procured for me by the Webbs. Presenting myself with this to Lord Granville, "a very youthful (i.e. about my age) person in a straw hat," as I described him to my mother, I was taken to see the Minister of the Interior, Herr Bethmann-Hollweg, destined in 1914 to earn "scrap of paper" fame; by him I was given letters to the Imperial Insurance Office and the Imperial Statistical Office whose effect was overwhelming.

Berlin. den 30 Aug. (1907).

. . . I spent the whole morning in the Imperial Insurance Office being handed on from one high official to another—each devoting himself to telling me everything—till I wound up with an official not quite so high (he didn't dare shake hands with me at the end) who explained the actuarial basis of the German insurance to me with a fullness which made my head go round. It was 3.30 before I got away to luncheon. . . .

Berlin. den 3 Sept. (1907).

I've just been furiously strenuous here. Don't suppose for a moment that I've got near pictures or sights. I simply haven't done a single sight in Berlin—except two theatres—because at night of course I can't work or interview people. Today I started off immediately after breakfast to present myself at a "Chemische Berufsgenossen-

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schaft"—an association of all the employers in chemical industries in Germany for the purpose of insuring workmen against industrial accidents. There I was received with open arms—partly because I came recommended by the Imperial Insurance Office (which takes me for an ambassador or a Cabinet Minister in disguise) and partly because the director is a statistical enthusiast and recognised a fellow spirit. Anyway I talked statistics for somewhat over two hours (in German); then rushed off in a cab to a "Schiedsgericht" (a Court of Arbitration in Pension Cases); then lunched; then had another hour in another Genossenschaft; then called successively on Bernstein (a Socialist of great fame) and Dr. Aschrott (a Poor Law authority); and finally dinner. Yesterday was just such another day—first thing in the morning to a Landesversicherungsanstalt (where again I was treated like a Cabinet Minister); after two hours of that, to the Labour Exchange; then to the Trade Union Central Office; then to the Labour Exchange; then tea and till dinner writing up notes of conversations; then the theatre—*Die Lustige Witwe* (a translation of which is now being played in London).<sup>1</sup>

All the other days have really been the same. I'm beginning to wonder when I shall see the sights. Every fresh person I go to finds the most convenient way of getting rid of me is to give me introductions to someone else.

I shall probably stay here till Tuesday at least—in the hope of seeing Dr. Freund and Dr. Munsterberg—two people whom I am most anxious to meet of all.

Do you know if it in Germany no woman may belong to a society having political objects?

Now I'm so sleepy that I'm going straight to bed. Tomorrow the interviews begin again.

I worked hard during this German trip, rejoicing to find that the German I had learned as a child came back to me; nearly everywhere I spoke German rather than English to the officials whom I met. I contrived to do a few things other than work. Thus at the Royal Library in Berlin, and in other Libraries at Munich and Frankfurt, I looked for oriental manuscripts and books bearing on my mother's study of Babur. I was shown often the name of my "Frau Mutter" in catalogues, but found nothing to help her on her way. In Berlin, eschewing the Shakespeare which I could have had in bucketfuls, I saw and heard in German, not

<sup>1</sup> *The Merry Widow.*

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only *The Merry Widow*, but also Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*—an admirable and unforgettable performance.

On the way south from Berlin to Nürnberg I stopped off at Halle to see the dearly loved Fräulein Vogel to whom more than any other I owed German as my second language.<sup>1</sup> I found her supporting herself by running a *pensionnat* for children and finding it hard to lay by for old age. She was going to find it harder still after 1918 when the mark lost all value in post-war inflation; I got a letter from her then and tried in vain to help her.

In Frankfurt I picked up a German book descriptive of the English Press, and turning to the account of the *Morning Post* I found it cited as an instance of that paper's breadth of view that a socialistically inclined political scientist from the Toynbee Hall circle wrote in it upon social questions. "The whole book," I told my mother, "is remarkably well informed—and remarkably complimentary to the *M.P.*" How thorough the Germans were, and how knowledgeable before Hitler came!

Finally I had five glorious days of solitary walking in the Bavarian Alps from Garmisch into the Tyrol and back, including the Zugspitze and the Dreithorspitze. After a night at the Königshaus am Schachen, on the way to the second of these mountains, I decided that heaven must be like waking in a summer dawn at 6,000 feet above sea-level.

I came back from Germany with direct knowledge of social security in practice, and more strongly opposed than ever to a means test for pensions. I had confirmed for myself what had been told me by others, that the German scheme for industrial accidents had merits lacking in our Workmen's Compensation Laws, and I set these merits out in one of my articles.<sup>2</sup> On this point I had to wait thirty-five years to use in writing the Beveridge Report what I had learned in 1907. In regard to old age pensions, the occasion for applying my new knowledge came at once.

In December 1907 the *Westminster Gazette* forecast that the Government scheme of old age pensions would be non-contributory and discriminatory. On May 7, 1908, this forecast was confirmed by the introduction of the Old Age Pensions Bill giving 5s. a week at seventy to everyone who was not a pauper, a lunatic, a property owner, a criminal, or possessor of an income of more than £26 a year. For the next two months, till the Old Age Pensions Bill left the Commons for the Lords and I left Fleet Street for Whitehall, I attacked the Bill and its authors night after night in leaders. I produced a succession of special articles—

<sup>1</sup> See *India Called Them*, pp. 236-7, and *passim* for Emma Vogel.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, Section 2 (e).



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now generally under my own name—arguing the case for contributory pensions. I accused the Government of “legislation on the cheap,” of exhibiting a “deplorable minimum of thought,” and of showing no knowledge either of the real needs or of the German way of meeting them.

As to the German system, Mr. Asquith, now Prime Minister, had the misfortune to be badly briefed; he dismissed the German system as inadequate on the ground that after eighteen years of operation it provided in 1907 no more than 126,000 old age pensions in a population of 52,000,000. This ignored the fact that the substantial provision for old age in Germany was being made, not under the name of old age pensions claimable at seventy irrespective of retirement from work, but as infirmity pensions claimable at any time when a workman became incapable of work. The number of infirmity pensions in 1907 was 843,000.

As to real needs, the experience of all the skilled trade unions in Britain providing superannuation benefit was that the age at which men grow too old for work varied greatly from one trade to another and one man to another. But in nearly all cases the age when pensions became necessary was well below seventy years.

What effect the *Morning Post* campaign of 1907-08 against non-contributory means test pensions may have had I cannot say. But the same line was taken by a good many speakers in the House of Commons, and the passage of the Old Age Pensions Act had a surprising sequel. Lloyd George, as Chancellor of the Exchequer since March 1908, had spent much of June and July in piloting the Old Age Pensions Bill through Parliament and in defending it against critics of its inadequacy and its means test. So late as July 9, he had associated himself with other Government spokesmen in the House of Commons in maintaining that the German system of compulsory contributory insurance was unsuited to Britain; the Government, he said, had examined it and rejected it. But unlike his colleagues he was not content to take briefs about Bismarck prepared for him by others. A month after this speech he set out on a motor tour through Germany to see Bismarck's scheme for himself. He returned “tremendously impressed with the finished character and perfection of the whole scheme . . . a vast system of insurance which was practically run by the country.” On the day of his return he announced this in a Press notice.<sup>1</sup> He had experienced instantaneous conversion.

The German State Insurance seen by Lloyd George in 1908, as I had

<sup>1</sup> Statement issued to Press on August 26, 1908, and appearing in *The Times* and elsewhere next day.

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seen it a year before, covered accidents, sickness, invalidity and old age, but made no provision for unemployment. On that there was more to be learnt in Britain, from the practice of trade unions. While campaigning for labour exchanges, I had never suggested that they would meet all needs. I wanted unemployment insurance as well. But unemployment insurance depended on labour exchanges. In July 1907 I published in the *Morning Post* two signed articles on this point. The first article described the unemployed benefits paid by British trade unions, under the title of "a great system of insurance." The second examined the possibilities and conditions of extension of insurance against unemployment beyond the present scope. It noted and explained the fact that no bodies other than trade unions had hitherto undertaken this work; they alone had labour exchange service at their command:

In practice unemployed claimants have daily to sign a book at some well-known "house of call" or central office to which vacancies for men are systematically reported. The provision of unemployed pay leads almost automatically to the development of a trade union labour registry or labour exchange.

The article went on to condemn relief work under the Unemployed Workmen Act and to assert that the basis of any satisfactory system either of insurance or of relief was a universal system of connected labour exchanges:

The organising at known centres of labour exchanges of the whole process of bringing would-be employers and employed into communication is the indispensable basis of any satisfactory system of public relief. Trade unions are able to assist their unemployed members cheaply and effectively because they can constantly check the need for assistance and test the claimant's ability and willingness to accept employment by the offer of a vacancy notified either through a formal system of registration or informally through their employed members. The State is forced into the costly and degrading harshness of the Poor Law simply because it has no control or supervision of the labour market. It must relieve always on the assumption that the applicant for help could find work if he looked for it, because it is never in the position to satisfy itself that there is no work for him. It must apply the test of the workhouse because it is not in a position to apply the test of an offer of real work.

It was an exciting moment when I realised that the Germans had reached an identical conclusion—in a three-volume Report on Unemploy-

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ment Insurance just published by the Imperial Statistical Office. Having decided that insurance against unemployment was technically possible, the first volume of the Report ended: "On one point all proposals agree . . . that in every form of unemployed benefit or insurance an adequate system of labour exchanges is of the first importance." The second volume of the Report was devoted accordingly to describing the existing labour exchanges in Germany.

August 22, 1907.

I have been more and more overcome by finding all my own ideas and belief in Labour Exchanges recurring in German blue-books and writings. If the Germans and I can understand one another at all our unanimity will be quite wonderful. It really *is* rather encouraging.

So, in thinking of unemployment insurance, I came back to labour exchanges, as needed not only for themselves, but for control of any provision for the unemployed, whether by insurance or otherwise, that should be free of degrading deterrence.

### 5. *Campaign for Labour Exchanges* .

My move to the *Morning Post* coincided in time with a change in the major interest of the Webb partnership. The Royal Commission on the Poor Law and Relief of Distress through Unemployment, with Beatrice Webb as one of its members, was announced on December 4, 1905. The Commission began on the Poor Law; as it came to deal with Unemployment, I saw the Webbs more and more. My letters to my mother record a talk about the unemployed with the Webbs, Charles Booth and Ernest Aves as early as January 1906. Before the end of the year, the foundation of an alliance was laid between the Webbs and myself :

December 3, 1906.

On Sunday last—I forget whether I told you—I lunched with the Webbs, which is always a liberal education. It was also very comforting because they both see and sympathise with the labour exchange idea (though doubtful as to my present machinery being sufficiently forcible), whereas most even of those engaged on the work—even my London parent—take it rather on faith from me. Mrs. Webb was rather down on H. G. Wells for his irresponsibility in taking up ideas and ventilating them without thinking them out. She had in

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mind his recent appeal to the Fabian Society to start on a crusade against the family at large. She asked me to dinner to meet him on Tuesday but alas I was already engaged. I am however to be introduced to the Chairman of the Poor Law Commission next Monday.

Of this Sunday luncheon I have a vivid recollection. I made some remark about unemployment which Beatrice tore to pieces, with an eloquent exposition of her own views. At the end of her harangue, I heard Sidney pipe up from the other end of the table: "You are absolutely right, my dear, and I agree with every word that you have said. But—there is just this in what Mr. Beveridge has said." There followed an exposition of my views in Sidney's language, and a complete acceptance of them by Beatrice. She had a mind so full of its own ideas that often she could take in other people's ideas only after predigestion by Sidney.

Thereafter co-operation became continuous. The Webbs secured for me a long evening with the Chairman of the Commission, Lord George Hamilton. When my Metropolitan Employment Exchanges began to get into hot water with the trade unions on the issue of sending men to jobs irrespective of the union rate, I took Isaac Mitchell of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers to thresh the whole business out with Sidney. Isaac Mitchell had been appointed to the Central Unemployed Body by the L.C.C. I met him again later in the Board of Trade, where he became, I think, the first full-time Labour Adviser.

I went on seeing the Webbs continually. Beatrice suggested my joining a Committee to go into all questions about the able-bodied. She advised me, in preparing my evidence about unemployment for the Royal Commission, to put in everything I knew and when I had done this, to the extent of 15,000 words, she invited me to spend the week-end of August 3 with them to go through my evidence in detail.

August 6, 1907.  
M.P.

I had of course a very entertaining time last week-end—after I had been misdirected by two porters to change at Hitchin (when the right station was Hatfield) and so arrived at Ayot St. Lawrence about three instead of about one. I was rather surprised at being directed to the New Rectory to find Mr. and Mrs. Webb. Apparently in the eighteenth century the old rectory was found too large and costly for the diminishing living and a new one was built (the old one being sold or leased) and now exactly the same fate has overtaken the new

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one. It too has had to be let by the Rector so that in Ayot there are the old rectory, the new rectory and the place where the Rector lives. The Bernard Shaws having taken the house for some time have lent it for the summer to the Webbs. I found them very full of the Poor Law and what is more—prepared to take up and back up Labour Exchanges. I spent Sunday morning being cross-examined on my statement of evidence by Mrs. Webb and the rest of the time talking about it or reading other people's evidence. They said I ought to arrange to be called as one of the first witnesses—because no one else had dealt with the subject at all comprehensively—and were altogether rather complimentary. I am going to put Labour Exchanges into a Socialistic form and they will undertake to get it published as a Fabian Tract. I shall also try at the same time to get it put in a C.O.S. form in the Charity Organisation Review. While I was there Mr. Justice Holmes (he's a son of Oliver Wendell and a very distinguished American lawyer) came to call. Also Mr. Seebohm (of Village Community fame). A nephew of the Webbs and a younger contemporary of mine at Balliol by name Hobhouse was there too. He is by way of being a mystic, much troubled at possessing as much as £250 a year in the Board of Education, anxious to be disinherited by his father, and inclined to regard it as wrong to ride in motor-cars because they are the luxury of the rich. Mrs. Webb told me she had made him go into regular work in a Government office as the only safe course!

I wrote my leader down there and sent it up by train on Sunday afternoon so as to get an extra night in the country.

Two things additional to what I wrote to my mother remain in my mind from this week-end. One was my impression of the inexhaustible industry and preparedness of the Webbs. They alone of all the Commissioners thought of going through my evidence with me. I felt that people who would take so much trouble deserved to succeed. My other impression was of their ruthless concentration on work. In a brief interval from explaining my evidence I spoke to Beatrice of a play that had interested me—probably *The Silver Box*, by Galsworthy—"a new and coming novelist" as I described him to my mother. Beatrice hadn't seen the play. She told me that she never went to a play, except one of Bernard Shaw's. She went to his plays because he was an old friend; she would not go otherwise.

When the Royal Commission was over, Beatrice described to me

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as most important the week-end at Ayot St. Lawrence, when I converted them to labour exchanges, because without that the Majority of the Royal Commission would not have gone as far as they did. I went off on the expedition to Germany described above, to gather material for further evidence, about labour exchanges in practice. I came back to be examined for a day and a half in October 1907 as the first witness on unemployment. After my dress-rehearsal at Ayot St. Lawrence, the performance went well. My friend of Charterhouse and Oxford days, L. R. Phelps, then Provost of Oriel, wrote to congratulate me on my evidence. "It impressed everyone not a little. The Chairman said, 'I shall keep my eye on that man.'" When they reported fifteen months later the whole Commission blessed labour exchanges whole-heartedly.

Having talked to the Poor Law Commission in person, I set to work on the memoranda about unemployment which the Poor Law Commission had asked for from the Board of Trade and which the Board had farmed out to me. As one of these memoranda had much to do with forming my views and the views of others on unemployment insurance it is dealt with in the chapter that follows. How I came to do these memoranda was explained in a letter to my mother, written just before the critical week-end with the Webbs.

August 2, 1907.

Today I have just been to the Board of Trade—being summoned by telegram which gave me a momentary hope that they might really mean business about Employment Exchanges. But all they wanted was to make arrangements as to some memoranda for the Poor Law Commission—which I agreed to do—and then to ask me if I would organise an inquiry for them into the cost of living in various towns. This would be a semi-permanent post with full time—but it's not what I want. Mr. McLeod whom I saw this time wanted to know if I found the M.P. remunerative, then whether I should consider £300 a year a fit salary (to which I said no!), then sprang it to £400 and then asked me to name my own figure and he'd put it before the Treasury. But I shan't do this.

I should have taken £250 for organising Exchanges sooner than £500 for an inquiry at the present moment.

The Board of Trade officials at this time were continually offering me one job or another—to work on the Industrial Census (February 1907), to investigate Cost of Living at home (August 1907), to investigate Cost of Living in America (April 1908) and so on.

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From October 1907 onwards, Sidney was putting labour exchanges into his own form, attributing the original idea always to me, but freeing me from responsibility for the "Utopian" plan which he was about to boom. A letter to my mother in February 1908 reflects this stage of the campaign and some of my intervening occupations. I had made a trial of Swiss winter sports, first at Andermatt in a Christmas party which included Rupert Brooke, and later at Arosa with Uthwatt and others; on the last day at Arosa I had torn a ligament in ski-ing and came back to two and a half months of massage. I had turned my physical inactivity to account by starting seriously on *Unemployment* and was groaning at having to go over familiar ground. The new ground I was wishing to break was concerned with unemployment insurance.

February 13, 1908.

The knee makes slow progress, getting—we hope and imagine—a tiny bit nearer the floor every day. But it's much freer and stronger to walk about on now and I get up and down stairs quite fast.

The unemployed book also gets on very slowly with many interruptions and some weariness. It is difficult writing about familiar things; the joy is in breaking new ground.

These two letters are rather nice. I'd heard that Webb had been saying at Cambridge that he had found out at last what to do for the unemployed, that I had told him (*viz.* Labour Exchanges) but that for some reason or other I wasn't prepared to go for *compulsory* Labour Exchanges. So I wrote and told him not to give me a character with one hand and take it away with the other—because I was quite prepared to have compulsion in some form when it became (as in the end it will become) necessary. His letter is a reply. It's pleasant to think of Exchanges being "boomed" by an arch-strategist like Webb. . . .

I met Ramsay MacDonald (the Labour Party Secretary) at the Economic Society. He's been one of the people who had abused Labour Exchanges. Now he writes and says he had been thinking them over and would I write and explain them in the *Socialist Review*, a new Socialist paper which he is to bring out. He thinks I might like to go for an audience "on the whole hostile" to me. Of course I'm delighted.

This is a dreadful letter justifying all the unkind remarks that people are beginning to make at me about being egotistic and monomaniac.

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By March 1908 the Webbs decided that the time had come to pass from propaganda for labour exchanges to action at the source of power. Government changes in prospect made this easier than it would have been before. The health of the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was failing; his predestined successor was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Asquith; that brought other changes into prospect, at which it was easy to guess. The Webbs invited Mr. Churchill to dinner and invited me also. The account of this party by Beatrice Webb can now be compared with what I wrote to my mother on the morning after:

MARCH 11. Winston Churchill dined with us last night, together with Masterman, Beveridge, Morton; we talked exclusively shop. He had swallowed whole Sidney's scheme for boy labour and unemployment, had even dished it up in an article in *The Nation* the week before. He is most anxious to be friendly and we were quite willing to be so. He and Masterman seem to be almost sentimental friends. Rhetoricians both are, but Winston has a hard temperament, with the American's capacity for the quick appreciation and rapid execution of ideas, whilst hardly comprehending the philosophy beneath them. But I rather liked the man. He is under no delusions about himself. And I am not sure that he is not beginning to realise the preposterousness of the present state of things—at any rate he is trying hard to do so, because he feels it necessary that he should do so, if he is to remain in the Liberal ranks. Will he remain in the Liberal ranks?<sup>1</sup>

MARCH 12, 1908.

My dinner last night was of course very interesting and mainly about Labour Exchanges. Mrs. Webb had sent their scheme (which is founded on me) to Winston Churchill before and he has been converted and is now at work converting Asquith. I don't think he is at all points clear as to what Labour Exchanges mean—as Mrs. Webb said afterwards you never quite know what he's going to hand back to you afterwards as his version of your idea—but still so long as he talks about the name it doesn't matter. I don't think I was as much impressed by his cleverness as I expected to be, he was or appeared to be rather tired and inconsecutive—but he was very amusing to listen to. The others at the dinner were C. F. G. Masterman and one Morton Sands who is doing inquiries for the Webbs. Masterman is rather horrified at Mrs. Webb's zeal for disciplining people and

<sup>1</sup> *Our Partnership*, p. 404 (Longmans, Green and Co., 1948).



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prayed that above all things he might never fall into her hands as an unemployed. He was also very anxious to be told how he ought to vote on the Unemployed Workmen Bill of the Labour Party to-morrow and was told that he ought to vote against it but I think he'll vote for it. . . .

The rest of the conversation is rather too scrappy to repeat except in conversation—the Webbs' division of people temperamentally into A's (aristocrats, artists, and anarchists) and B's (benevolents, bourgeois, and bureaucrats)—Winston Churchill's horror of being called a Liberal—the Salvation Army officers as a new religious caste or order (an officer may only marry an officer) and their resulting power—Burns as drowned beneath administrative cares at the L.S.B.—St. Paul as the first Fabian (his appropriation of "the temple to the Unknown God" for his own purposes is typical of the Fabian plan of using every instrument that offers)—the church or chapel built by some latter day sect with a tank of water in the roof which could be emptied downwards on the congregation at a moment's notice so as to save them and them alone in the final conflagration of the world, etc., etc.

Sidney Webb is going to come on the Central Unemployed Body. This ought to be rather amusing.

The two accounts are in agreement, except that according to my account the talk was not exclusively shop, as Beatrice described it.

On April 4 Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman resigned and was replaced by Mr. Asquith. Mr. Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Churchill, succeeding him as President of the Board of Trade, vacated his seat in Parliament and had to present himself for re-election in North-West Manchester.

April 14, 1908.

My dearest Mother,

I hope you have noticed the election address of the new President of the Board of Trade—with its reference to unemployment and the decasualisation of labour. You will also like to know (but you mustn't tell others than Tutu) that about his first official act was to send down to the Labour Department for literature on Labour Exchanges. I was there—doing an odd job—at the time and was informed of this by the man who had to supply the literature (whom I have seen a good deal). So between us we supplied the President with all the works of W. H. B.—the Economic Journal and the

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Contemporary articles, pamphlets, and Poor Law Commission memoranda—and he went off with them to Manchester. It really looks as if he meant to take Labour Exchanges up seriously when he gets to work—which is very exciting but quite secret.

I haven't been doing any book of late and am rather fretting at obstacles. I've had to spend my time of late on the Salvation Army and in the Labour Department. But I'll get through in time.

I do not know at what time in these proceedings the Webbs gave to Mr. Churchill the advice which they reported to me later: "If you are going to deal with unemployment, you must have the boy Beveridge." It may have been before the dinner-party, or at it, or just after, or when the new President was already appointed. He took a little time to get into the saddle. He was delayed by losing the by-election in Manchester and having to win a new seat—at Dundee. Meanwhile I went on during May and June with a diet of Licensing Bill leaders and my campaign for contributory insurance in place of free, inadequate and discriminating Old Age Pensions. I went on with my book on Unemployment, which was now to appear as lectures at Oxford in the autumn. I fought the first round in a lengthy contest with educationalists as to how the new agency of labour exchanges should deal with juvenile employment.

My first letter of July to my mother gave news.

July 3, 1908.

I have just been offered and have accepted a permanent appointment in the Board of Trade—£600 a year—to begin at once or at any rate within a fortnight. And I have seen the Editor and the Canon and been congratulated. And the work at first will be Labour Exchanges and the rest of the unemployed problem from the side of the industrial organisation rather than relief.

I hope you will be as delighted about it as I am. It gets me into the State machine exactly where I want to be.

It all came about thus: On Wednesday I went by invitation to a conference on the unemployed—the President (Winston Churchill), Sidney Webb, Llewellyn Smith, Wilson Fox and me. The upshot of this was that the President expressed his intention of taking up Labour Exchanges seriously and wanted a memorandum to back his views—which I undertook to prepare (voluntarily). However on Thursday I was called up again by telephone to see Wilson Fox—who is I think second in command—and he gave me to understand that the President was passing sleepless nights till he should obtain my perma-

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nent paid services—and what was the price of them? I had really no idea what to say. (I wasn't going to go for less than £500 but I thought they would stick at giving more.) However I said my *M.P.* earnings were about £600 a year for a very few hours a day; to which Wilson Fox replied tentatively by citing others who had recently come in at various prices especially one at £500 (a Professor if you please). However it dawned on both of us that I was disinclined to lose in actual income by the change—the uncertainty of the *M.P.* may be set against the fact that it can be earned in far less time—so we left it at my agreeing to look at the job at £600. I didn't expect to hear at once but this morning I got a summons to see the President and I have just seen him and I have been definitely appointed at my own terms and the sooner I start the better. . . .

I feel that the change has come just at the right moment.

Mr. Churchill had not been the first person to try to get me into the Board of Trade. But he was the only person able to invite me to do what I was set on doing—to organise the labour market by labour exchanges. No other chance would have moved me.

I began work at the Board of Trade on Monday, July 13, 1908. By special permission I was allowed to return to the *Morning Post* for one night on July 28 to write a leader on the House of Lords discussion of the Old Age Pensions Bill. I was allowed also to deliver my Oxford lectures in the Michaelmas Term and to publish them, with much revision and additional matter, as *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*. As an illustration of one thing that went better in those days, I may record that I signed the contract for this book with Longmans on September 29, 1908. By the middle of November I had corrected nearly all the proofs, and I had a copy to send to Beatrice Webb early in December. The book, with statistical tables galore, was published on February 9, 1909, four months from contract.

On the *Morning Post* I was succeeded by Harry Tawney, who had joined the paper soon after I did as Educational Critic. Shortly after he left for full-time lecturing for the Workers' Educational Association; he married my sister in June 1909. Tawney's successor on the *Morning Post* was J. R. Brooke. But in November 1908 the proprietorship of the *Morning Post* was changed by the death of Lord Glenesk, who had borne so kindly the Radicals imported by Fabian Ware. There came disagreements and the end of Ware's editorship in 1911. In 1937 the *Morning Post* itself disappeared into the *Daily Telegraph*.

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The *Morning Post* in 1905 enabled me at twenty-six to earn a living by doing exactly what I most desired—by studying social problems theoretically and practically and writing about them. A few years before, the same paper rendered much the same service to another young man at about the same age; it helped Winston Churchill to see and describe war at Omdurman in 1898 and it sent him to South Africa in 1899, to become by his adventures there a popular hero and so lay the foundation of his political career at Oldham in 1900. The *Morning Post* of fifty years ago represents a type of private enterprise which, I hope, may appear justified by its varied results.

### 6. *A Question for Reformers*

The main reflection suggested by the events of this chapter is of how central and united the public opinion of the British people is. At General Elections, the British, being forced to choose between A, B or C to govern them, take their differences deeply to heart and quarrel bitterly. When the Election is finished most of them return to co-operation. Over a large range of public affairs broadly the same line is taken, whether A has been elected, or B, or C. Influence, reason and special knowledge have their chance, whoever the temporary owners of power may be. But they have this chance only if there is a channel of access to those who have power. It is not easy to claim success for any part save one of the social reform campaign which I waged through the columns of the *Morning Post* from 1905 to 1908. The one exception relates to the problem of unemployment. There access to the seat of power was given to me a little by the Royal Commission, but mainly by the Webbs. The owners of power are generally too busy for thought. The Webbs had time as well as brains for thought. They had social contact also with Cabinet Ministers; they could entertain the owners of power to dinner. They owed both things—time for thought and social contact with the powerful—to Beatrice's possession of £1,000 a year inherited from her father. Where will the next generation of young reformers find their Webbs?

## Chapter IV

### WHITEHALL AND INTO WAR

Civil Servants are the seamy side of the British Constitution  
the seams without which it would fall to pieces.

*The Civil Servant of the Future*  
(Lecture in King's College, London, April 29, 1921)

#### 1. *The Board of Trade and its Presidents*

THE Board of Trade, when I joined it, was a large and varied Department on the point of becoming larger. It covered commerce and industry, shipping, railways, copyright, patents, and labour questions, so far as these last were the subject of action by Government; in practice, in July 1908, this meant labour statistics and conciliation in trade disputes. The labour side of its work received a large extension in two ways soon after I joined the Board—by the establishment of labour exchanges in 1910 followed by unemployment insurance in 1911, and by the passage of the Trade Boards Act in 1909. The territory of the old Board of Trade is divided now between seven departments each with its Minister—Supply, Materials, Labour and National Service, Transport, Food, Fuel and Power, and the Board of Trade itself.

Though dealing with so many new problems of the day, the Board was archaic in form. It was in formal style the Committee of the Privy Council on Trade and Foreign Plantations dating from 1696 and re-constituted in 1786. As a Committee, it included among its members, in addition to the principal Secretaries of State, such unexpected dignitaries as the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and the Speaker of the House of Commons of Ireland. All its most formal acts were recorded as proceedings of a Committee. Thus the minute by which I became Director of Labour Exchanges runs in the following terms:

AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WHITEHALL

This Thirtieth day of September, 1909

P R E S E N T

The Right Honble. Winston S. Churchill, M.P.

Read the Labour Exchange Act, 1909.

Read also letter from the Treasury dated the 21st September, 1909,

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transmitting a copy of a Treasury Minute for placing the office of Director of Labour Exchanges under Warrant under the terms of Clause 4 of the Superannuation Act, 1859.

The Board of Trade are now pleased to appoint Mr. William Henry Beveridge to be Director of Labour Exchanges at a salary of £700 per annum, rising by £25 per annum to £900 per annum.

This appointment and salary to date from the 24th September 1909.

H.L.S.

Winston S. Churchill.

The initials "H.L.S." at the side of Mr. Churchill's signature are those of the Permanent Secretary, Llewellyn Smith. The reference to Clause 4 of the Superannuation Act means that, by exceptional procedure, I was made pensionable without reference to the Civil Service Commission.

No other members of the Board had any chance of being present on this thirtieth day of September 1909, either to support or to oppose my appointment, for no notice of the meeting was given to them—before or after. It used to be a favourite remark of Sidney Webb's that in Britain it is easy for good reason to change the form of an institution without changing the substance, or the substance without changing the form, but that one should never try to change both the substance and form of anything at one and the same time. That would be asking for trouble. The transformation of the Government organ in charge of most of our economic affairs from a Committee to a one-man Ministry is an excellent illustration of changing substance while preserving form.

The Board of Trade in 1908, in addition to its archaic form, was anomalous in another way, bringing practical consequences. Though it was already one of the largest and most important of the Government departments, its President did not rank high in the scale of Ministers. Till 1910 he was paid only £2,000 a year as against the £5,000 of a Secretary of State and the £2,500 of the Postmaster-General. Even after this financial inequality was abolished he ranked lower than many others in dignity. This had an important effect, that for a successful politician the position of President of the Board of Trade was a stepping-stone only to something higher or more colourful. This meant, in turn, that the influence of the officials was relatively great, particularly the influence of the Permanent Secretary. In my first six years at the Board we had four different Presidents—Mr. Churchill, Sydney Buxton, John Burns and

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Walter Runciman. It was natural that at times we should regard ourselves as the Board, and our Ministers as perhaps pleasant but certainly transient and occasionally embarrassing phantoms.

If I had joined the Board only three months before I did in fact join it, I should have worked under yet another Minister as well—Lloyd George. On the formation of the Liberal Government in December 1905 Lloyd George had been given the choice of becoming President of the Board of Trade at £2,000 a year or becoming Postmaster-General at £2,500. He had the imagination to prefer the former post, even at the cost of losing £500 a year in salary. He found at the Board a remarkable and constructive Permanent Secretary in the person of Hubert Llewellyn Smith with a string of measures waiting to be put through as soon as a live President appeared. Lloyd George took them up and achieved in two years what his official biography described as a remarkable success in non-controversial legislation—on Merchant Shipping, Companies, Copyright, Patents, and the Port of London. In dealing with a threatened railway strike he proved a successful conciliator. From the reputation thus made he proceeded to become Chancellor of the Exchequer and to all that followed thereon.

### 2. *Establishment of Labour Exchanges*

The formal minute that is printed above, making me Director of Labour Exchanges, had to wait till labour exchanges were on the Statute book. My first appointment to the Board of Trade took a less picturesque form. Four days after I had begun regular work in Whitehall in July 1908, I received a letter offering me an appointment there. The engagement was to be in the service of the Comptroller-General of the Commercial Labour and Statistical Department of the Board of Trade—then George Stapylton Barnes—and my duties were to be such as he might from time to time direct either personally or through officers of the Department under him. The office hours were to be from ten to five, but my whole time must be at the service of the Department if required. The salary was £600 a year without pension gratuity or allowance for retirement. The engagement was terminable at any time on one month's notice. I was selling a great deal more of my time for the same money as in the *Morning Post*, losing my right of public utterance, and without security of tenure. If by some political accident the Government had not gone ahead with labour exchanges, I should have been nicely caught.

By the time that I received this formal offer I had practically com-

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pleted my first official work—a 7,000-word Memorandum on Labour Exchanges, setting out the argument for labour exchanges in theory, the argument from example of Germany and other countries, and “practical proposals.” The printed proof of this is dated July 20, 1908. By about the same time I got myself housed in a room of my own—above the entrance to Gwydyr House looking out on Whitehall. The question whether I was entitled to a carpet was hotly debated, but settled in my favour; whether or not my salary justified this amenity, it was ruled that I must have a room suitable for important interviews.

On the principle of labour exchanges all proved plain sailing. The Royal Commission on the Poor Law and Relief of Distress through Unemployment, in the second half of 1908, were still drafting their Majority and Minority Reports. When these Reports were published in February 1909, it was found that they agreed in recommending the establishment of a national system of labour exchanges. Six months before appearance of these Reports, though not in ignorance of their prospective contents, Mr. Churchill had obtained the assent of his colleagues to doing just this. The Labour Exchanges Bill introduced in May 1909 became law on September 20. The first exchanges under this measure opened their doors on February 1, 1910. This was the culmination of a strenuous period of organisation on novel lines.

The labour exchanges in 1909 represented a new departure in central government, not paralleled by any of the existing departments, even where these departments were active throughout the country. The business of the labour exchanges was to render a service to the citizens—not to extract money from them as the Revenue Departments did. The service to citizens required of the labour exchanges was not like the selling of postage stamps and postal orders; it was personal, discretionary, and infinitely various from one locality, or one industry, to another.

In Germany, adjustment of exchange practice to varying local needs and conditions had been secured automatically, by putting the labour exchanges under the control of municipal authorities. The possibility of following this example in Britain was explored. My first official memorandum of July 20, 1908, put local authority exchanges encouraged and co-ordinated by the Board of Trade with grants in aid (on the analogy of Education) and a national system directly under the Board of Trade (on the analogy of the Post Office) as evenly balanced alternatives:

The Board of Trade under Mr. Winston Churchill in 1909 might have thought fit to set up exchanges experimentally and sporadically,



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where previous discussion with employers and workpeople suggested that there was special need for them and a definite prospect that if established they would be fully used. The Board might have thought fitting in place of establishing their own exchanges, to try to interest local authorities and by offers of financial assistance to bring into being a system of municipal exchanges like that of Germany. The actual policy of the Board was more audacious and more direct. They set out to establish as rapidly as possible a full blown system under their own control. They took over and absorbed into this national system all the existing exchanges with any life in them, notably those of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London; they secured the closing of all others.<sup>1</sup>

This policy of national labour exchanges would probably have been adopted even if unemployment insurance had not been in contemplation. The decision for it came down to me from higher authority in the Board, before the introduction of unemployment insurance was certain. But, from the first, unemployment insurance was highly probable. The necessity of establishing, in every part of the country, a uniform system of exchanges and other offices to administer insurance made direct action by the Board of Trade unavoidable.

But the labour exchanges in practice must be more varied and human than Post Offices. It followed that there must be great decentralisation of authority. There should in each part of the country be officers authorised to adjust the scheme to varying local conditions. From this came the marking out of the whole of Britain into twelve divisions for labour exchanges, with a Divisional Officer at the head of each. The Board of Trade led the way down which so many other departments have followed today—that of regional organisation. With labour exchanges in 1909 the object of regional organisation was to devolve responsibility from Whitehall. People concerned in local administration after the Second World War often have reason to feel that regional organisation of Government departments is only another master added to the masters of Whitehall.

The labour exchange organisation had to be established at once and everywhere, so as to be ready for unemployment insurance if it came. This necessity excluded appointment of the staff by the Civil Service Commission through what was then its almost universal procedure of written examination. Such examinations are effective only if the candi-

<sup>1</sup> *Unemployment (1909 and 1930)*, p. 296.

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dates are of comparable age, and the age must not be too high. Capacity to write down rapidly answers to questions put without notice is like capacity for Rugby Football—a power which diminishes rapidly with every year after twenty. For the labour exchanges we needed older men, and men not all of the same age.

At the same time, in order to secure men of the right standing for the new Government service, we had to offer them the prospect of becoming established civil servants with pensions. The power of making all appointments was reserved to the President of the Board of Trade, but of the men to be appointed many were to be pensionable, and there was need to raise a defence against charges of patronage. In respect of managers of individual exchanges, the plan was adopted of the President making appointments on the advice of an independent Committee of Selection, with Stanley Leathes, the First Civil Service Commissioner, as Chairman. For the appointment of the twelve Divisional Officers, the President of the Board of Trade could not avoid direct responsibility, and they were substantially appointed on interview by himself or his principal officials. But one day, just before a number of candidates for these important posts were going to present themselves to Mr. Churchill for consideration, he asked me if I could not do something to defend him against a charge of patronage, by devising a written examination for them. Having regard to the variety of their previous experience, and the fact that almost the only thing common to all candidates would be that they knew nothing about the work that they were to do, the invention of a written examination at two hours' notice was by no means easy. I thought out two or three questions which might give the candidates the opportunity of showing special interest in industrial or labour questions. But the prize question of the examination was of a somewhat unusual kind. I dictated an imaginary letter from an angry employer to the Divisional Officer, criticising mistakes made by the exchange in sending him men, and I invited the candidates to write their answers to this letter. One of the candidates, having given such provisional answers as he could to the employer's complaints, ended his letter by suggesting that the trouble could be discussed most happily over, and after, luncheon; he invited the employer to meet him for that purpose. This was the winning answer. The giver of it, J. B. Adams, who had been in the Merchant Navy and second to Shackleton in a South Pole expedition, was appointed Divisional Officer of Labour Exchanges in the North Midlands and proved very successful.

The procedure of the Board of Trade for appointments led naturally

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to criticism. The *Standard* came out with a headline about "10,000 appointments by patronage." The Royal Commission on the Civil Service, or at least one member of it, Philip Snowden, when I gave evidence before it on October 17, 1912, was not easy to satisfy. In fact some such procedure as we adopted was the only possible procedure and needless to say there was nothing at all in the nature of political patronage.

The Divisional Officers, in addition to J. B. Adams mentioned above, included Richard Bell, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants; W. S. Cohen, who had been engaged for some time in the Land Settlements Departments of the Orange River Colony; T. W. M. Fuge, an Irish J.P. who had held a number of posts chiefly with police in South Africa from 1900 to 1908; Carlton Hackney, a barrister for a time working in H.M. Office of Works; J. T. Homer, leading member of a Local Authority in the Midlands, but claiming also at one time to have run a labour exchange in Chicago, with a revolver provided as part of his office equipment in the drawer of his desk; G. W. Irons of the Education Department of the London County Council; W. E. Long, a soldier by profession, who had acted as Assistant Commissioner of Police in Cyprus; Colonel A. M. Murray, another professional soldier; O. W. Owen, of the Mines Department of the Transvaal and with ten years' banking experience in Britain; S. W. Scott, with a varied experience of municipal administration and finance; R. F. Williams, who had been secretary to a colliery in South Wales. There was appointed also an organising officer for Women's Employment, Miss M. E. Marshall, whom I had met first in the Whitechapel Charity Organisation Society, and who had since been a co-opted member of the Central Unemployed Body.

Most of the labour exchange managers were described as drawn from among men who had experience of industrial conditions, either as works managers and foremen on the one hand, or as trade union officers on the other. They included a Lord Mayor of Cardiff, the secretary of Ruskin Hall, a Director of Prisons in the Transvaal, and the general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Wood Cutting Machinists.

All these appointments could be made only after the Labour Exchanges Act had become law and only after the chief or chiefs of the new organisation at headquarters had been settled. On this it was suggested to me at first by my superiors that as executive head of the system should be appointed C. F. Rey, at that time private secretary to the Permanent Secretary, Hubert Llewellyn Smith, while I remained without executive responsibility as an expert inventor of schemes, whether of exchange work proper or of unemployment insurance, to be carried out by the new

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machine. I can only guess at how this suggestion arose. It did not appear to me a good plan. It meant, as I put it, that one man would be giving ideas to the labour exchange staff, while another man would be giving them their orders; as an expert celerating *in vacuo* I would lack the daily contact with reality to make my ideas practical as well as new. My argument on this was accepted. I became Director of Labour Exchanges at £700 a year rising to £900. Rey was appointed simultaneously as General Manager, at £600 rising to £800. For the responsibilities involved these salaries seem today modest.

The Head Office needed more than a Director and a General Manager. There came first a charming colleague, as Assistant General Manager, in the person of Basil Blackwood, son of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava. He had held various posts in South Africa; he was better known to a wide circle as "B.T.B.," illustrator of the *Bad Child's Book of Beasts* by Hilaire Belloc. There followed three exceptionally able young civil servants whom we extracted from the Board of Trade proper—Stephen Tallents, Umberto Wolff,<sup>1</sup> and Thomas Phillips. Each of these, in coming to us, gave up his place in the Board of Trade hierarchy, with the prospect of regular promotion there, in order to get an immediate rise of pay and to chance his arm with our new venture. They were a strong trio, each with a special gift added to general ability. Tallents was best of the three in judgment, Wolff in speed, Phillips in accuracy and mastery of detail. Each of the first two made his mark later outside the Civil Service. Phillips, a civil servant *par excellence*, rose highest in the Service before he finished; in World War II as Under-Secretary in charge of recruiting for the Armed Forces, I found myself serving for some months under Phillips as Permanent Secretary to the Ministry. With each of these three, as well as with another early member of the Central Office—J. S. Nicholson, a Toynbecite like myself—I had happy times of varied collaboration later.

In addition to staff, it was necessary to find premises. The Central Office was established at Caxton House. For the exchanges Rey and I went rushing about the country combating the desire of H.M. Office of Works to place our exchanges in those parts of the industrial towns which had the least savoury reputation. They seemed to us—and would have seemed to Mrs. Grundy—to have the wrong idea about how to attract employers and workpeople to labour exchanges.

<sup>1</sup> Wolff, though of mixed Italian-German origin, was a natural-born Briton and became Humbert Wolfe on January 1, 1918, by appearing as such with a C.B.E. in the New Year Honours.

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On February 1, 1910, the first labour exchanges of the national system, sixty-one in number, opened their doors. Another eighty-seven followed by the end of 1910. By the end of 1912, just when unemployment insurance came into action, there were 414 labour exchanges, together with some 1,000 local offices of the fund.

The labour exchanges began with plenty of limelight and nice things said or written to me which I reported faithfully to my mother but need not reproduce today. Nor need I say anything of the later history of this new public service. I gave a short account of it up to 1930 in the revised edition of *Unemployment* and many fuller accounts have appeared elsewhere. But I may fitly say something here of one thing that I worked at continually without success.

My first contact with unemployment had been in the dock district of London; effective decasualisation of labour in the docks became a consuming passion and a King Charles's head in my conversation. I realised that voluntary labour exchanges would not end this evil. As early as 1907 I was writing to Sidney Webb to assure him that I was entirely ready for compulsion in that field. Introduction of unemployment insurance presented a way of getting compulsion indirectly, by applying insurance to dock labour on special terms. In 1913 there was need for a Bill to amend Part II of the National Insurance Act; I persuaded the President (by then Sydney Buxton) and Llewellyn Smith to let me try for a clause under which insurance could be extended to dock labour under a special scheme designed to promote decasualisation. When the Bill was before Parliament I reported progress almost daily to my mother, sometimes with good news and sometimes with bad, but ending with success—so far—on July 26: "The Casual Labour clause got through Committee all right on Thursday—which means the first stage well over. The clause admits of my scheme—and of others—and it's now my business to see that my scheme is carried out. I had a frantic rush at the end, coaching Dr. Macnamara—who had suddenly to turn on and speak because Mr. Robertson of the B. of T. could not. He did it rather well." Thereafter came a visit to Nauheim and Dr. Schott for my heart, but on return I continued to plan revolution in the docks. By the first of January 1914 I was reporting to my mother achievement of "a monumental memorandum on casual labour." But then came a change of Presidents, from Sydney Buxton to John Burns; the new President, I told my mother, is not active. And, before he could be made active, war broke in. Later chapters of this volume record how, in war and its aftermath, I continued to pursue this earliest of my social aims.

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### 3. *Beginning of Social Insurance*

As practical propositions for Britain, compulsory insurance against sickness and invalidity, and compulsory insurance against unemployment, were conceived in the same year 1908 and they came to birth together three years later in the National Insurance Act of 1911. But the parentage was different.

Sickness and invalidity insurance was the result of Lloyd George's visit to Germany in August 1908 and the enthusiasm inspired in him by Bismarck's invention of 1889. On return from this German visit, he got busy at once. By October he was explaining his proposals for compulsory insurance in confidence to, among others, the Webbs, who disliked them extremely. In April 1909 in his Budget Speech he told the House of Commons about them; the Government were working at compulsory insurance for sickness and invalidity. He introduced this announcement by enthusiastic reference to what he had seen in Germany: "a superb scheme it is." He spoke of putting ourselves in this field on a level with Germany; we should not emulate them only in armaments. In form and detail the British scheme differed from the German, taking account of the great development of voluntary insurance in Britain through Friendly Societies. But it is safe to say that Britain would not have had compulsory health insurance as early as 1911 if Germany had not shown the way.

Compulsory insurance against unemployment owed nothing to any working model in Germany or elsewhere. It did not exist anywhere in 1908. British unemployment insurance was the fruit of hard thinking about British unemployment by, or in the time of, the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws. The Commission, when they reported on February 1, 1909, blessed labour exchanges with both hands. On unemployment insurance they took differing lines. The Minority, that is to say the Webbs, wanted compulsory labour exchanges but did not want compulsory insurance; they proposed that the State should confine itself to encouraging voluntary insurance by subsidies to trade unions undertaking it—the so-called Ghent system. The Majority described the establishment and promotion of unemployment insurance, especially among unskilled and unorganised labour, as of paramount importance. But not being prepared to approve any actual scheme brought before them, they recommended the setting up of a small Commission or Inter-Departmental Committee of experts and representatives of existing trade benefit organisations to frame a scheme.

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The Government had anticipated the Royal Commission's Report in respect of unemployment insurance, as in respect of labour exchanges. In his Budget Speech of April 1909 Lloyd George, in addition to plans for sickness and invalidity insurance, announced that a scheme for compulsory unemployment insurance was far advanced; the Board of Trade had been working at it for six months, that is from October 1908. It was so far advanced that Mr. Churchill, as President of the Board, was able on May 19, 1909, to describe it in detail to the House of Commons, including the trades to be covered and the contributions required.

Exactly how the Government were led to the policy of compulsory insurance for unemployment, I am not certain. When the National Insurance Bill, containing unemployment insurance as Part II, was before the House of Commons in May 1911, Sydney Buxton, who had by then succeeded Mr. Churchill at the Board of Trade, disclaimed parentage of unemployment insurance and said that "the first idea was that of . . . the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

The details were worked out by . . . the Home Secretary [Mr. Churchill] assisted . . . by the very able staff which the country fortunately possesses at the Board of Trade.

There may have been a touch of diplomacy in this attribution of the first idea of unemployment insurance to Lloyd George, as Chancellor of the Exchequer; it was important for the Board of Trade to keep him, as a dominant member of the Cabinet, sympathetic to Part II of the Act. But Sydney Buxton was too honest a man to say things because they were diplomatic, without some basis of truth. The foundation of his statement is, I imagine, that when Lloyd George returned from Germany filled with enthusiasm for compulsory insurance, he suggested to Mr. Churchill, to whom unemployment had been assigned as President of the Board of Trade, that the possibility of using the same method in that field should be examined.

But for Sydney Buxton's statement, I should have said that Lloyd George never had anything to do with unemployment insurance. With the framing of the scheme he had no concern. My invitation to the Board of Trade had been to deal with "labour exchanges and the rest of the unemployed problem from the side of industrial organisation rather than relief." The necessary sequel to labour exchanges was unemployment insurance, if a practical scheme could be framed. I had been writing about that in the *Morning Post*. I had prepared in November 1907 a lengthy memorandum for the Poor Law Commission describing all

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foreign schemes of unemployment insurance and drawing the moral; this memorandum had been commissioned by the Board of Trade and Llewellyn Smith had read it.<sup>1</sup> In effect Mr. Churchill asked Llewellyn Smith and me as his apprentice to try our hands at preparing a practical scheme of unemployment insurance. There emerged rapidly the scheme which came to be adopted, and embodied in Part II of the National Insurance Act. It was a scheme combining "compulsory contributory insurance for limited benefits in selected trades with subsidies to voluntary insurance through associations in all trades." The logical steps leading to this scheme were set out by Llewellyn Smith in his Presidential Address to the Economic Section of the British Association in 1910. The salient points of this address I have given elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

The scheme that we prepared owed little to any model overseas. We adopted the German plan of raising contributions from employers and employees by stamps attached to cards; but we should almost certainly have been forced to think of that ourselves. We treated labour exchanges as the indispensable organs for unemployment insurance, as the German writers of blue-books said they must be; but we had discovered that for ourselves by reason, and had confirmed it by observation of the British trade unions in administering unemployed benefit. In so far as we used any working models, we used the trade unions—in particular their practice of requiring signature of a vacant book in working hours as proof of unemployment, and their common provision of a waiting period before benefit began. When we came later to discuss our proposals confidentially with representatives of the trade unions we found our way eased materially. They were delighted to find that we seemed to know and to copy their practice so closely.

The official memoranda showing the development of the first unemployment insurance scheme, which are preserved now in the archives of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, begin in November 1908. They bear the initials of Llewellyn Smith, as the accompanying memoranda on labour exchanges bear mine. This no doubt is the explanation of the statement made many years later by Mr. Churchill, in his broadcast of March 1943, attributing labour exchanges to me and unemployment insurance to Llewellyn Smith.<sup>3</sup> But the distinction is a mistake; neither the schemes nor the minds can be separated.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 3.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1930 edition of *Unemployment*, pp. 265-6. The description of the ultimate scheme quoted just above comes from the same source.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XV, p. 326.



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To say just what Llewellyn Smith did and what I did respectively in framing the first unemployment insurance scheme would be difficult if not impossible today. Exchange of ideas and argument was continuous. I can remember, for example, one novel feature of the scheme which sprang from him. As one experienced in dealing with Parliamentary Questions he said to me that some means must be found of relieving the President of the Board of Trade of constitutional responsibility for decision on individual claims to benefit; otherwise the President would have to spend most of his life in explaining why benefit had been refused to John Smith or withdrawn from him. There followed the invention of Insurance Officers, Courts of Referees and Umpires. I can remember another feature of the original scheme which sprang from myself. This was limitation of the period of benefit both to so many weeks in each year as a maximum and by reference to the total number of contributions paid by the individual—the so-called “one in five rule”—one week of benefit for every five contributions paid. Some such rule seemed to me indispensable both as a safeguard against malingering and because the scheme applied only to work in a few insured trades—building and works of construction, engineering, shipbuilding, construction of vehicles. Some men would be found passing continually into and out of insurance; there must be some rule determining automatically their total claim to unemployment benefit. Llewellyn Smith did not like my idea at first but surrendered to persistent argument: “Very well,” he minuted back to me at last. This one in five rule was inconsistent with any idea of making unemployment insurance a complete provision against want through unemployment. But there was no such idea in these early days. Unemployment insurance appeared as a risky adventure into the unknown. When our draft Bill proposing 7s. a week as the rate of unemployment benefit came before the Liberal and Radical Cabinet of 1910, the only serious criticism reported to us was that the rate of benefit was dangerously high. Could we not cut the rate to 5s. a week? But we stuck to our 7s.

We had to support our proposals by getting an independent actuary to pass them as sound financially. Since in regard to many of the occupations we proposed to cover—most of the building tradesmen and the labourers—there were no figures by which the risk of unemployment could be judged, it fell to me to create the straw from which the Board of Trade Actuary, Mr. T. G. Ackland, would make his bricks and erect his blessing of our plans. I was lucky in finding a very kindly gentleman. One of my major efforts of imagination was to assume that in the building

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industry as a whole the rate of unemployment would be double that recorded for the trade union carpenters and plumbers: almost any other guess would have been equally defensible. I felt at the time that I might almost have been left to write the actuarial report myself.

We had, so far as possible, to conciliate in advance the outside interests most likely to be affected by our scheme, that is to say the trade unions. In this my old opponent of the Metropolitan Employment Exchanges, Isaac Mitchell of the A.S.E., now become Labour Adviser in the Board of Trade, proved invaluable. He brought a number of trade union leaders to hear just what we proposed and to discuss it with us. The confidence of our talks was never broken; the scheme itself was improved; a favourable reception for it on the side of labour was practically assured.

Of the arts of legislation I knew nothing, while Llewellyn Smith was a past master. Under him as apprentice I learned the technique of all the successive stages—of memorandum and heads of a Bill prepared by ourselves; of getting Parliamentary Counsel to work—we felt particularly happy in having Frederick Liddell assigned to this task; of writing voluminous Notes on Clauses for the guidance of our Ministers in the House of Commons—I put terrific energy into this with the help of Thomas Phillips who had just done a similar job on a Copyright Bill, and I got a welcome pat on the back from my master Llewellyn Smith; most exciting of all, when the Bill was in Committee, came arming of our Ministers to deal with amendments. This meant first thing in each morning scanning the Order Paper from the House for new amendments; dictating a note—in six or more copies—upon each amendment; amalgamating the new notes with the notes already made; and arriving at 11.30 or so for conference with the Minister and superior officials, bearing a complete document for each of them to work on.

The note on amendment began by saying snappily what the Member probably intended by it, and what its effect would be—often something quite different. There followed as a rule two or three reasons, each more decisive than the rest, why the amendment should be resisted. Every now and again there would be advice to accept the amendment or offer some concession. Then with decisions taken at our morning conference we would go down to the House, to watch from the official gallery how our Minister performed. On at least one occasion I have heard a Minister, having picked up the wrong page from his sheaf of notes, read out to his own and everybody else's satisfaction the reply on a different amendment than that which had just been moved.

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Unemployment Insurance in 1911 was not an ordinary Bill. It called for more than the standard techniques of legislation and with Llewellyn Smith it received them. I remember, for instance, his coming back from a week-end at home with a list of fifty objections of principle and of detail to our scheme, from different and often conflicting points of view.

Unemployment is an accident of industry just as are accidents. The whole cost of compensating for it ought to be met by the employer, as under the Workmen's Compensation Acts.

Unemployment is a personal problem. The whole responsibility of providing for it should be left with the workman.

Unemployment is a national problem. The whole cost of providing for it should be met by the State.

Insurance is impracticable without compulsory labour exchanges. With such exchanges it is unnecessary.

The benefits proposed are too high.

The benefits proposed are too low.

The scheme is an endowment of trade union fighting funds, since every penny saved on unemployed benefits is available for disputes with employers.

The scheme involves unwarrantable interference with trade union autonomy.

Workmen will constantly be losing their insurance cards. . . .

The scheme makes no mention of women.

And so on. The objections left an opening for everybody, even for decimal system enthusiasts. They might argue that the adjustment of weekly contributions to keep the fund in accurate balance would prove impracticable without decimal coinage as a preliminary. I was set to draft answers to all these objections. By the time that I had done we felt that our Minister, armed with "Objections and Answers," ought to pass his examination in Parliament with colours flying.

My youthful alliance with the Webbs had achieved its purpose when it landed labour exchanges and me in the Board of Trade. Adoption of compulsory unemployment insurance meant a parting of ways between us. The Webbs disliked social insurance as such; Lloyd George's first broaching of his scheme to them in October 1908, as reported by Beatrice, led to "heated discussion." "The *unconditionality* of all payments under

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insurance schemes constitutes a grave defeat. The state gets nothing for its money in the way of conduct." When, later in 1908, they learned our plans for unemployment at the Board of Trade, Sidney expressed to me his sorrow that we seemed to be doing just the opposite of what he desired. He wanted compulsory labour exchanges and voluntary insurance; we were going for voluntary labour exchanges and compulsory insurance. But the Webbs were always nearer to us than they were to Lloyd George, and kinder to Part II of the National Insurance Bill than to Part I. When the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission appeared in February 1909, it said that, while preferring to give State subsidies to voluntary insurance against unemployment, the signatories would not object to a partial compulsory scheme. I have always suspected that these last words were a last-minute concession to the inevitable, put in after the writer knew what was coming. When, at the beginning of 1911, the nature of both Parts of the Bill became public property, Beatrice noted in her diary: "The unemployment insurance might bring inadvertently the compulsory use of the labour exchanges, and the standardisation of the conditions of employment. But the sickness insurance . . . is wholly bad. The invalidity scheme may be only an extension of old age pensions, to which there could be no objection."<sup>1</sup>

More than thirty years later, though still within the lifetime of the Webbs, I was to present social insurance in a new light, as an application of the Webbs' own doctrine of a national minimum for all. "My Plan for Social Security is part of a policy of a national minimum."<sup>2</sup> Abolition of want required that men should be assured a minimum income for their family needs, not merely when earning, but when unable to earn through causes beyond their control—sickness, invalidity, old age, accident or unemployment. The Beveridge Report of 1942 stemmed from what all of us had imbibed from the Webbs.

In my first months at the Board of Trade I had some contact with health insurance as well as with unemployment insurance. I remember being present when a deputation of Friendly Societies came to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George. The Chancellor did nearly all the talking—with immense success. He seemed able to understand what the members of the deputation wanted and were thinking, by watching their eyes as he talked. I should have liked the chance of acquiring the same gift myself by seeing him oftener in action. But the two schemes of insurance had few points of contact; they went their

<sup>1</sup> *Our Partnership*, p. 469, January 1911 (Longmans, Green and Co., 1948).

<sup>2</sup> Address in Caxton Hall March 3, 1943 (printed as ch. 13 of *The Pillars of Security*).

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separate ways, save for a brief forced marriage of political convenience as Part I and Part II of the National Insurance Bill of 1911.

Mr. Churchill's time at the Board of Trade was short. He left us in February 1910 to become Home Secretary—one of the highest offices in the State. I reported our leave-taking to my mother:

I said good-bye to W. S. C. yesterday and we were mutually admiring. He said that my future was assured and that he was very glad to have brought a man like me into the public service and that we should meet again. So I said I hoped so and that nobody but he could have given the exchanges such a start.

Mr. Churchill's Presidency of the Board of Trade is a striking illustration, as I have put it elsewhere, "of how much the personality of the Minister in a few critical months may change the course of social legislation."<sup>1</sup> And he was immense fun to work for. I remember Llewellyn Smith observing once to me with rueful admiration: "The President has a mind about everything—and it's a mind one must attend to." I remember a dinner with him newly married—a dinner *à trois* so that I might talk business with him after his Sunday golf, and a dinner at the Webbs for him to meet a group of Cambridge Fabians. I remember going to him at his home one morning with the first list of Divisional Women Officers for the labour exchanges in the midst of the first 1910 election campaign. He was in great demand as a speaker; had just returned from Manchester by night and was resting in bed. He took my list. "Let there be women," he said, and signed.

Soon after this creation of women we were welcoming Mr. Churchill's successor at the Board of Trade—Sydney Buxton, coming on to us from being Postmaster-General. We were fortunate indeed in this appointment. Sydney Buxton was a gentleman and a Radical, a man whom everyone liked and trusted, a man sent to Parliament by the constituency of Poplar and moved by abiding interest in problems of poverty.

When he came to us, most of the heavy work of bringing unemployment insurance to birth had still to be done. The outline scheme, as announced in May 1909, had to be turned into a Bill; it appeared at last in public as Part II of the National Insurance Bill of 1911 with Health Insurance as Part I. The Bill had to be got through Parliament (this as will be related proved easy going), and only then could all the subsequent steps of making regulations and forms, and of establishing offices and

<sup>1</sup> *Unemployment (1909 and 1930)*, p. 264.

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appointing and instructing staff, be undertaken. It was nearly three years after Mr. Churchill had left the Board of Trade before unemployment insurance went over the top, by making the first payments of unemployment benefit in January 1913.

Through all this time Sydney Buxton was our President. He had not the vivid personality or the command of words of his predecessor, but he had everything else that was needed. He had not, indeed, perfect lucidity of speech; his mind was always clear, but the word he wanted was not always the word he used. The story went—no doubt untruly—that he was apt to miss trains by saying to the cabby “Liverpool Street” as a means of getting to “Victoria” or vice versa. Even this one defect in our new President—of lucidity of speech—could be turned to gain by a civil servant who knew his job.

When Part II of the National Insurance Bill reached Committee stage in the House of Commons, mercifully upstairs in Standing Committee, our Ministerial team consisted of Sydney Buxton and John Simon, then Solicitor-General. When any clause in our Bill could with advantage be made crystal clear, we put up John Simon as our spokesman. If there was any clause that it seemed safer to keep in decent obscurity, we put up our President. Said the Committee: “We are not quite sure what this clause means, but Buxton is an honest man. He wouldn’t sell us a pup.” And the clause went through.

In the event Part II got through Committee and Report stage with almost ridiculous ease in six days, between November 1 and 16 of 1911. I reported duly to my mother the observation of Bonar Law as leader of the Unionists on the Committee, that the Bill had been very well worked out in detail, as I reported a bouquet from the Secretary of the Ship-builders’ Federation to me directly that it was one of the best thought out measures he had ever come across. The trade unions concerned had expressed their approval of the scheme six months before.

While Part II was having this easy time, Part I of the Bill was being driven through the Committee of the whole House by the guillotine and the will of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. By the middle of December 1911 National Insurance was on the Statute book and our President wrote me a charming congratulation on Part II.

December 17, 1911.

My dear Beveridge,

Now that “Part II” has actually become an Act, I must write you a line of very warm congratulations on the event.

To you, and to H. Smith, the country owes a deep debt of gratitude

## WHITEHALL AND INTO WAR

for the inception of the measure, for working it out, for its careful modification, and for its successful passage through Parliament.

You may well be proud of your handiwork; for in all essential particulars the Act is the Bill as introduced.

As regards my own share, which was a minor one, it has been a *real pleasure* to work with you in such a matter as this; this co-partnership has made much of the satisfaction I feel in the whole affair.

I hope you will have a good holiday. You badly want one.

As one of the kindest men in the world, he fulfilled his concluding hope himself, by inviting me to join his party for winter sports in the Engadine.

The heavy work of putting unemployment insurance into practice remained to be done after this holiday. We could not engage the staff and acquire the offices that would be needed till it became certain that the National Insurance Bill would become law, as it did in December 1911. The commencement of the Act was fixed for July 15, 1912; this became officially "Joy Day" though it meant only the beginning of contributions. Benefits were fixed to start six months later still, from January 15, 1913. To the officials of the Board of Trade this, or rather January 24, when the first benefits must be paid in cash, became "Judgment Day." Would the machine that we were setting up to do something never attempted before get into action smoothly? Would it defeat our hopes and break down? On the last day of 1912 I wrote to my mother about this prospect.

... I too have come back from Christmas idleness like a giant refreshed, and ready to put the final touches to the Unemployment Insurance machine. It's really in its way rather impressive to me to think of this machine which we've been furiously building for the last year, now standing ready (I hope) to start on Monday next for the first time into a life of which one cannot see the end. For on Monday the 1,200 local agents and 450 labour exchanges throughout the country will begin to receive applications for unemployment benefit; to make inquiries on each of the last employer; to send the applications up to the divisional offices where an entirely distinct part of the machinery will seize them and sift them and decide what benefit is due on them; to send them back to the labour exchanges and local agents, who will pay out benefit, and record the payments and record the unemployment; and in due course send the application forms back to the divisional offices and central offices to become the raw material

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of audit and statistics. And there will be special pieces of machinery for dealing with appeals by workmen against refusals for benefit (eighty little courts of justice sitting once a week throughout the country), and for paying out benefit through trade unions. And all this, once started, must go like clockwork, and with absolute continuity—for there will be a perpetual stream of applications for benefit sometimes large and sometimes small but never ceasing. Will the machine work? It's really almost as new in type as was the first steam locomotive, and of course one hasn't been able to make experiments and trial runs. Of course it will work, somehow, but with how much or how little friction and partial breakdown and dislocation, one cannot tell.

Well, that's a lot about my work, but you'll forgive it, because you'll want to understand what just this week or two means to me. I *think* the machine is well enough designed to stand the strain, but it's so large and complicated, and it's had to be designed against time, and not without some unnecessary hindrances to one's work and waste of one's time—so at times I can't help doubting whether it will really work at all.

Three weeks later I reported to my mother in written conversation what seemed a satisfactory result:

January 25, 1913.

Yesterday was the big day of trial—the top of the climb. I went round some London exchanges and got reports from elsewhere. And apparently it's been all right—or at least sufficiently right, so I'm rather happy with myself. Three years to the day from the opening of the first exchange.

There's rather a difficulty in Dublin, and I'm going there if I can next Tuesday.

We must have paid something like 25,000 men in London yesterday. At one exchange alone some 2,500 men came to sign the unemployed register each day, and 1,800 had to be paid yesterday. And they all insist on coming for their money at the same time.

They will—for a few weeks—when building will start again.

But we don't mind the same number. The second and third time they'll be so much easier to deal with.

Of course in times of bad trade we'll have very many more to deal with.

Seeing the men lining up in a perfectly orderly way to get paid



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at Kilburn, and realising that the same was happening at 1,400 other places all over the United Kingdom, and had never happened anywhere before, was quite impressive to my vanity.

I am not suggesting that the task of launching compulsory insurance against unemployment before World War I was greater than that of launching compulsory health insurance at the same time. Statistically the first of these tasks was much smaller, affecting  $2\frac{1}{4}$  million employees as compared with at least four times that number under health insurance. But ours was a different task, with no precedent at all and placing more direct responsibility on the civil servants taking part in it. Individual dealing with insured persons under health insurance fell, not to the National Insurance Commission, but to approved societies, in their two main groups of Friendly Societies and Industrial Life Offices; the former had been administering sickness benefit for years; the latter had already for death benefit a clientele of many millions and a large staff to cope with them in a new form of insurance.

The development of compulsory unemployment insurance after its launching has been described by me in another work.<sup>1</sup> I wrote also two official Reports on it—one covering its first year to July 1913, and one for the following year. Though this last, prepared in 1915, was never published, it is available in the School of Economics Library and elsewhere. The Report of 1913 drew encouraging conclusions:

First, compulsory state insurance against unemployment in scheduled trades appears to be administratively practicable. No insoluble difficulties have presented themselves as regards the definition and test of unemployment. Some sort of demarcation of the insured trades has been effected.

Second, compulsory state insurance can be introduced without destroying voluntary insurance. The amount of voluntary insurance has, indeed, been enlarged rather than reduced by the compulsory scheme.

On the larger question of how far the benefits of this scheme will go towards preventing distress from unemployment, in bad times as in good, judgment must for the present be suspended. The next depression of trade will show.

It is at least possible to look forward to the next depression from a new standpoint. The invested balance of the machinery for distribu-

<sup>1</sup> *Unemployment (1909 and 1930)*, chapter xiii. The first Report quoted here is Cmd. 6965 of 1913.

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tion of the Fund is established. The depression that must come in due course will not find the country wholly unprepared.

The next depression did not come in due course. It came as part of the aftermath of World War I.

Before the war came on us, we experienced at the Board of Trade yet another change of President. In February 1914 Sydney Buxton became Governor-General of South Africa and was succeeded at the Board of Trade by John Burns. If the future of labour exchanges had still been in doubt, this change would not have boded well for them. From his revolutionary youth as breaker of police cordons and leader of the London Dock Strike of 1889, John Burns, with high office, hardened into *laissez-faire*. In my campaign for labour exchanges I had failed with him as completely as I had succeeded with the Webbs. From a visit to Germany he had drawn the opposite moral to myself. To him as an old trade union organiser the great waiting-room of the Berlin exchange with its rows of men waiting for a call was a repellent sight—strike-breaking fodder; he waxed eloquent to me on this, and would not listen to my argument that it was better for the men to be sitting comfortably there than to be wearing out shoe-leather in blind search of jobs.

With high effice had come to him an almost childish vanity. Among the civil servants of that day the story went that in the Cabinet, and particularly with Prime Minister Asquith, John Burns had influence beyond his deserts, because he was the only member of the Cabinet who dropped his aitches; he appeared to be the authentic voice of Labour. My recollection of his opening address to the principal officers of his new Department is that he wound up by expressing the hope that we would be as good as officials as he would be as President. But with his vanity went a pleasant raciness of speech and—more important—a readiness to suffer for convictions. On declaration of war against Germany, as a pacifist he resigned from the Government. He was succeeded at the Board of Trade by Walter Runciman.

## Chapter V

### DIVERSIONS OF A DIRECTOR

For me, partly because I was made so by my father and mother, partly because I was told so by Aristotle thirty-five years ago, happiness is doing something and a holiday is doing something else.

Address on *My Utopia* to Cosmopolitan Club of L.S.E.,  
October 23, 1934.<sup>1</sup>

IN my first years as a civil servant I found myself working hard at what looked to me the most important work needing to be done; abolition of want seemed only just round the corner. But my life was by no means all work and no play. In the first month of labour exchanges I reported to my mother:

February 24, 1910.

I'm burning the candle hard at both ends this week.

Monday. Office till 7.15. *Justice* in the evening.

Tuesday. Office till 12.20. Flying visit to Southampton and back just in time for 8 p.m. dinner with Mrs. Morgan Williams at the Sesame Club (when I met Mr. and Mrs. Crawshaw Williams of Kishim fame).

Wednesday. Office till 7.15. *Misalliance* in the evening.

Thursday. Office. Hair cut and hat ironed. Visit to opening of Apprenticeship Exhibition at Mansion House, and home to dinner for one night in the week with father.

Tomorrow I dine with a Chamber of Shipping and on Saturday I come down in "HER."<sup>2</sup>

I've sold my rubber shares for something between £120 and £130, having bought for £20. I wish life was always as simple as that.

B. Shaw is getting boring in his old age. I shall bring *Justice* down for you to read.

Forty years later I can add as postscript that the rubber share profit reported in this letter is, with one exception,<sup>3</sup> the only money I have ever made without working for it. Those were days when new rubber-

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *Planning Under Socialism* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1936).

<sup>2</sup> The two-cylinder Riley car described on p. 101 below.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter X, p. 216.

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growing companies were being floated daily. Dick Denman, who knew about these things, gave me a tip about a rubber company which was not only being floated, but owned an estate on which it was possible for rubber to grow. I should add also that B. Shaw's old age went on for another thirty-seven years.

My diversions, as the letter suggests, included much going to theatres. They included also much reading of books, and endless conversation. But the prevalent note in use of leisure in the last years before World War I is something different from these—it is activity in play as intense as activity in work. There were not nearly so many resources as today for passive enjoyment. There were concerts and theatres, but there was no radio or television to be enjoyed at home. The cinema was rudimentary, without talkies, and with moving pictures more often as one feature of a mixed entertainment in music hall or elsewhere than as a whole night's programme.

We had fewer passive ways then than now of occupying eyes and ears. On the other hand, many activities both of mind and body came more easily then. At Pitfold, their home on Hindhead, my parents kept open house for my sister's friends and mine, for week-ends filled to the brim with talk or exercise. The copper beech which figures in my second book, *John and Irene*, sheltered endless conversations. The monkey puzzle next it was preserved in vigour by persistent Balliol pruning. Many other homes of like character were open to me elsewhere—at Tring with the George Trevelyans, at Beaulieu with Canon Hannay, at Newtimber with my Ministerial Chief, Sydney Buxton, at Farnham Castle with Bishop Talbot. There were no youth hostels, but stravaiging about Britain was not hampered by doubt as to finding accommodation within our limited means, whether we drove or walked or sailed or paddled. Stravaiging about Europe, or outside it, was ludicrously simple, with no passport or currency regulations. When I wished to take my mother to Madeira for Christmas 1909 I bought tickets for the boat and took her. When I wished to visit Sicily with my sister in the spring of 1913, we wandered all over Sicily and from Trapani across to Tunis, back from there to Marsilles and so home, without showing a passport anywhere. I celebrated my appointment to the Board of Trade in 1908 by going with my sister to the Tyrol and Italy on a walking tour. At one point of this we found ourselves at an inn in the Martell Thal without enough Austrian money. The proprietor made no difficulty about accepting an English sovereign; more accurately, his only difficulty was that, not having seen such a coin before, he had no

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idea of how many gulden it represented—but he was prepared to take our word for that. My sister and I must have been singularly carefree about money on that tour. Soon after the Martell Thal, having crossed a mountain pass to Italy, we found ourselves approaching Bormio, with practically no money left after paying our guide. We invested the few lire that we had in hiring a carriage to drive us the last miles into Bormio, so as to make a good first appearance there. We were rather proud of this idea: the proprietor of the best hotel made no difficulty about allowing us credit till we could get money sent to us.

Almost all our play before World War I was active. When we went to theatres we sometimes turned them into a game for ourselves. When walking over mountains I did not forget to be a statistician or a chess-player as well. When we motored, as I did from 1908 onwards, we seldom completed a journey in passive enjoyment; motor-cars were in their infancy and called for the strenuous care proper to infants.

We were as far as possible from being wholly serious. We had a passion for nonsense and became experts in nonsense of many forms. Our amusements can be ranged conveniently under the heads of physical activity, primitive motoring and sailing, pursuit of nonsense, and the social round, leading to *John and Irene: An Anthology of Thoughts on Woman*.

### I. *Physical Activity*

My friends and I played many of the usual games, but generally with a special twist to them. Thus Uthwatt and I never played lawn tennis singles against one another without half a crown on the set; we were so equally matched that without a side-bet we might have indulged in rash hitting in place of pursuing victory. I invented six-handed lawn-tennis, three a side with two balls served simultaneously from the right- and left-hand courts and a centre player at the net; the rally continued till both balls were down or out, with two points to one side or one point each. The game gave scope for teamwork in concentrating both balls simultaneously on the same opponent opposite, so as to give him no chance of returning either. For the winter at Pitfold we had badminton in what had once been a barn; we proved to our satisfaction that one could play perfectly with no illumination except a motor head-light at each end of the net. One never saw or needed to see the shuttle as one struck it; its position could be judged by its course out of darkness into darkness through the narrow beam of light above the net. For the winter also we had mixed hockey for all comers. To the beautiful wife of a Cambridge

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professor we explained that though she must put the ball in motion only with her stick she could stop it in any way she chose. She proceeded, whenever the ball reached her, to sit down on it in a curtsy so graceful that no one had the heart to disturb the picture that she made.

My physical activity included going up innumerable British mountains, though I remained a ridge-walker rather than a climber.

My expeditions abroad also were mainly for walking. But once or twice I tried to be a climber. One day, walking above Sulden, in Tyrol, my sister and I came across two young men sitting by the side of the road, addressed them in German, and were answered in German; suddenly all of us realised that we were all British. The young men were Cyril Hartree (to be killed in World War I) and his younger brother. We all wanted to climb at least one real snow mountain. We found ourselves in joint revolt against a trade union rule among guides, which required that for every tourist on a snow mountain there should be a separate guide—four guides for four of us if we went together. We decided, since the choice was between four guides and no guides at all, that we would make a guideless expedition. We did so and proceeded up the Monte Cevedale. We all had ice-axes and a rope, and led by Cyril Hartree we went with great solemnity up the gentle slopes of this mountain, moving carefully one at a time, while other tourists, led by their guides, ran past us rapidly; the Cevedale was a well-known "cow mountain," that is to say, a mountain within the climbing power of a cow. At the top my sister and young Hartree and I observed in turn: "This is the first snow mountain I have ever been up." We waited for Cyril Hartree to say which was his first snow mountain. He said: "I will tell you when we get down." The Cevedale was his first mountain also.

Two years later I joined Hartree in a real climbing expedition to Arolla and Zermatt, with a guide retained for the whole holiday. In the first of these places we met George Mallory, of later Everest fame and fate. He was paying for his Swiss holiday by bear-leading a youngster who didn't want to climb at all. I remember Mallory coming in to the Arolla inn, looking like a Greek god. In Zermatt we found the original Edward Whymper, still haunting the scene of his disaster—by now a garrulous old man. But we had no luck with weather. We managed to get up Pollux in a dense mist, the only 4,000-metre mountain in my collection; we had to give up Monte Rosa next day; we ran away to Macugnaga and the Italian Lakes.

Winter sports in Switzerland had been invented recently. Reference has been made already to my first expedition, in 1907, and my return

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from it with a damaged knee. The passing of Part II of the National Insurance Act at the end of 1911 was crowned for me by a visit to the Engadine with the President of the Board, Sydney Buxton, and his family. I never really mastered ski-ing. On the other hand, I was elected a "Minor Fryer," that is to say one of three adults admitted by election to an exclusive society of Buxton and allied children who reserved to themselves as "Major Fryers" the sole control of the Fryers Society; our totem was a bear and our secret password was from *Rob Roy*—"A Plague on all Aberdeen Almanacs." I invented stories for the Fryers and wrote to them a parting poem beginning thus:

### TO THE FRYERS IN EXILE

#### AN EXHORTATION TO BE BRAVE

Dear Major Fryers, when I marked  
Your drooping flag at half-mast set,  
And saw the crowd beside the door,  
And knew that every cheek was wet,  
And every heart was wild with grief  
Since I was going—I appeared  
Perhaps too little moved myself,  
Too keen to start, too deeply cheered  
By thoughts of England, duty, home  
To spare a thought for your distress  
Or wonder how you would endure,  
Without me in your loneliness.  
It was not so. Beneath my joy  
Your sorrow touched me all the same.  
Have I no heart? You know, 'tis yours.  
Have I no bear? From you it came.  
Think not so lightly of my love.  
The spectacle of all your woe  
So moved me that almost I was  
Not altogether glad to go.  
And still, now I am back again  
(When I have nothing else to do)  
I drop a tear for you; and still  
(When I have time) I think of you.

The English Lakes were my principal haunt for walks. They were used by some of my friends for another game—the Man Hunt. This

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game, invented I think by the Trevelyan, consisted of a party of anything up to twenty or thirty going alternately to Langdale or to Seatoller, defining on the map a hunting ground, and sending two of the party as "hares" with red armlets on to the ground immediately after breakfast; the rest, giving the hares half an hour's start, followed to stalk them and catch them. The Hunt gave scope both for craft and for speed; it went on all day, and the evening followed with singing and nonsense of many kinds. The membership of the Hunt included many who were or became later well known in politics, academic life, writing or the professions. I dropped into the Hunt in Langdale by chance at the end of a solitary two days' walk in May, beginning at Saddleback, to find a string of friends and acquaintances—George and Charles and Molly Trevelyan, Arthur Steel-Maitland, J. W. Gulland, Francis Maclaren, E. J. Howarth, A. P. Oppé and others. Herbert Samuel was not there on this occasion but was a member. I was told of him that, though without speed, he was one of the cunningest stalkers of them all. I hunted one day—insanely trying to catch George Trevelyan up the steep side of Crinkle Crag. I walked next day with Charles and Molly Trevelyan from Langdale to Keswick. "An amazingly good holiday—charming solitude to start with and charming company to end with—the ideal combination and in the proper order." So I reported to my mother on my return to London.

I became thereafter for a few seasons a member of the Man Hunt. But I never caught a hare and my chief contribution lay in conversation and Lake limericks.

There was an old person of Fleetwith  
Whose riches no man could compete with.  
He'd a private balloon,  
Wore a fur coat in June  
And used champagne to harden his feet with.  
A sporting young blade on Red Pike  
Once thought he'd come down on a bike.  
As he hit with his stummock  
The waters of Crummock  
He cried: "This is just what I like."

The first of these came from B. P. Moore, of Balliol and the Board of Education, with whom I once walked the Lakcs. The second was my own; it hits off compactly the topography of Crummock and Red Pike. Great Gable, Green Gable, Kirk Fell, Black Sail, Pillar, Hay-



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stacks, Seatoller, Grey Knotts, and Brandreth all figured in our collection of this type of nonsense.

Though the Lakes were my commonest resort for hill-walking, the rest of Britain was not neglected. I was able at one time to claim the record of having been up the highest points in England, Wales, and Scotland—Scafell Pike, Snowdon, and Ben Nevis—without having seen anything at all from any of them; I had been in dense mist all the time. Ireland too was part of our province; Dick Denman and I went round the coast of Donegal and south by Westport, Achill, Recess, and the Twelve Pins, to fall among London friends again at Mount Trenchard by Foynes. I described this walk to my mother as one of “bathing whenever and wherever we could and reading Dante in the intervals.” We found accommodation always by chance, often a happy chance, as at Malin More in Donegal.

May 31, 1911.

We were told that Mrs. Crawford “kept tourists” (much in the tone in which one would speak of a person keeping white mice) but that no one else did. However Mrs. Crawford had room for us and treated us excellently. We found her house full of mathematical and classical books and learned that these belonged to her son who was just completing his fourth year in the Indian Police at Allahabad!

In climbing and walking over mountains I did not forget my passion for statistics. My first expedition to the Tyrol, with my sister, I summed up in the following table:

Statistics for 20 days. . . . August 25 to September 13, 1908 (including three days devoted entirely to sleep or travelling)

Total number of feet climbed: 72,000 feet.

Average per day: 3,600 feet.

Greatest on any one day: 9,200 feet up and 4,300 feet down.

Greatest height reached (Monte Cevedale): 12,380 feet.

Average height at which the nights have been spent: 5,540 feet.

Greatest height at which any one night has been spent: 10,290 feet.

Normal time of going to bed. 9 p.m.

Normal time of getting up: 6.30–7 a.m.

Average time out of doors: 10 hours. (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.)

Reading accomplished: 2 cantos of the First Book of the *Faerie Queen*.

Ice-axes bought: 1.

Motor-cars bought: 1.

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I brought statistics to the rescue when walking alone in the Lakes, by estimating in advance just how many steps it would take to reach a given point ahead, and seeing if I could do so. This was an antidote to tedium on parts of Skiddaw and Grasmoor.

My friends and I felt that we knew the hills well enough to treat them as our own—without respect. Uthwatt and I once played a rubber of picquet on the flat top of Ingleborough, as we had played many in Gray's Inn. In walking over Lakes hills with my cousin Phil Mair (now my stepson also), we beguiled the time often by playing blindfold chess—a game that I had first learned with Dick Denman for boys' clubs in South London and railway journeys in Norway. We discovered that the standard of chess deteriorated sharply the moment we came to rough ground and had to think where to place our feet as well as where to place the king in relation to an opposing rook or knight.

Walking about England and Scotland I looked regularly for "Bowen" peaks. This, I believe, was an invention of a famous schoolmaster of Harrow, and meant a point from which one could see at least three miles in every direction. The highest peaks are not generally Bowens. Scafell and Scafell Pike, for instance, each ruin the claim of the other. I don't know how many Bowen peaks I discovered in England; in the larger scale of Scotland they are fairly common. As there are Bowen peaks, so there can theoretically be a Bowen point at the bottom of a bowl in the hills if their sky-line is on all sides three miles away. But I never found such a point in practice. Once I got my mathematical cousin, David Mair, to work out for me how high a Bowen point must be in the middle of an absolutely flat plain, having regard to the curvature of the earth. The result is that it must be just six feet high. That is to say, a man whose eyes were six feet above the ground, living on a perfectly flat part of the earth, would always be in a Bowen heaven.

One other statistical exercise in walking may be mentioned here, though it took many later years to complete. I discovered that in the Lake district alone there were some sixty-five points marked on the ordnance map as above 2,500 feet, and I set out to climb them all. I have now climbed all except five, and these I have given up.

Mountain-climbing and Man-Hunting were not the amusements that the doctors would have ordered for me, if they had been consulted. At school, I had been a skinny boy, playing football without skill or force, though with determination. I achieved the height of my ambition in being chosen in my last year to play for my House in a cup-tie and, having played, I collapsed just before I was due to go to Oxford for a

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scholarship examination. Thereafter, by various misadventures, I discovered that I had a dilated athlete's heart. At an Old Carthusian Day at Charterhouse I ran in the Old Boys' race and fell and collapsed at the end of it; appropriately that day was April 1, 1911. A year later, in April 1912, I went walking with Hartree from one end of the Cheviots to the other, beginning at Wooler, spending a night with a shepherd in Makendon at the head of Coquet Dale, and ending in Newcastleton; a few miles short of the end my heart failed me again. So I had to let the doctors have their way and give me Nauheim baths at home in 1912, and at Nauheim itself with the famous Dr. Schott in 1913. The first of these treatments gave me a chance both of completing the proofs of *John and Irene* and of beginning to write my autobiography. The second treatment enabled me to take my mother to Ghent for an Unemployment Conference and to Baden-Baden in an after-cure.

I proposed to visit Dr. Schott again at Nauheim in August or September 1914, but the Kaiser disposed differently. One good thing I owe to World War I. It made me so busy and so much restricted my chance of exercise that, having undergone one more course of Nauheim baths, in London during October 1914, thereafter I forgot about my heart and returned to live a normal life, with British mountains at least open to me. And I postponed for forty years the writing of an autobiography.

### 2. Primitive Motoring and Sailing

My table of achievements in August and September 1908 records purchase of one motor-car. As soon as I had exchanged the easy but risky £600 a year of the *Morning Post* for the £600 of the Board of Trade, I bought a motor-car—a Niley with two cylinders, set at an angle to one another like a motor-cycle engine, costing £286 and with an absolute maximum speed of 35 m.p.h. It had no electric lamps and no self-starter. On my first night journey I failed to make either the acetylene headlights or the oil sidelights work, and I ended the journey by borrowing a lamp from a railway guard to see me safely into the nearest town. The second edition of *Unemployment*, which I presented to my mother in 1912, is inscribed to her from the "left-handed Director," because my right arm was out of action from a back-fire in winding the handle. The tyres were an incredible trouble; they never lasted for more than 4,000 miles.

My mother's diary, describing a journey back from the Lakes to

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Hindhead in two days (150 miles a day, not at all bad going for a car with a maximum speed of 35 m.p.h.), records cheerfully: "Two punctures and one burst tyre. All well otherwisc." Actually on the first of these two days we began by running into a flood near Rosthwaite, stopping the engine and failing to start it, and having to be dragged out by a passing horse and cart. Miraculously the engine decided after that to start, and we completed our journey. One other note from my mother's diary is typical of those days. It records of an April Sunday in 1909: "Will under her most of the day." I bought this car when I had £600 a year. As soon as I had been appointed Director at the salary of £700 a year, I hired a chauffeur; the car became largely my mother's car and my letters to her dealt repeatedly with the care of tyres, brakes, lamps and the chauffeur: "He has the uneducated person's fault of being content with a car so long as it will run somehow (Don't tell him this, please, as it is only for you). A reserve brake is an essential part of a car."

The cars of 1909 were an education in smiling through adversity. Fortunately my mother was both tireless and fearless as a passenger. I took her once from Llanidloes to Machynnleth direct by Killhope and Stay-a-Little, a route which the Contour Book for cyclists described tersely as an impracticable road, consisting entirely of hills "utterly unrideable up and highly dangerous down"; she enjoyed every moment of it.

The travels of my friends and myself were not confined to land. Dick Denman had introduced me to canoeing down the Wye in 1903, and I made several expeditions of this kind. We started generally at Hay or Glasbury and ended at Chepstow; with a tearing current behind, one could make good distances—sixty miles once in a day—when one had acquired the art of shooting rapids, though there was one fall at Monnington that we took always in the nude. The journey that I remember best now was with A. A. U. (the future Lord Uthwatt) in Rob Roy canoes in 1909. We began that expedition by getting, at Hereford, "Bed and breakfast and the next day's sandwiches for two for 5s. 9d." We spent the next day, while our canoes were on their way to Glasbury, in walking across Black Mountain and failing to agree as to whether we had been over the summit or where the summit was or whether Black Mountain had a summit.

Soon after this we took to salt water. At Bosham by Chichester, where King Canute is alleged to have made his experiment with the tide, Dick Denman and I found a small half-decked broad-beamed sailing boat, which we purchased for £20 with her dinghy, and called the *Irene*. In

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her we wandered about Chichester Harbour and to and around the Isle of Wight. One of the high spots was a Coronation Cruise on which, in June 1911, we reviewed the battleships of Britain in the Naval Review. The party consisted of Reeve Brooke, John Maude, Harry Tawney, Andrewes Uthwatt and myself. The log written by me records with meticulous care just who was steering and who was look-out man on each occasion when we ran aground, as we did continually, on one side of the unmarked channel or the other. There followed either kedging off or failing to get off and drying out. But we did in the end get into Spithead—to run aground again and dry out again off Bembridge. “All hands bathed,” says the log, “and Tawney left for Oxford in mackintosh and parts of trousers. Dressed ship with drying clothes, Uthwatt’s trousers at the masthead. Royal yacht passed. . . . Went to Ryde to see illuminations and saw them. Returned to Bembridge and saw same illuminations.” Next day, using our privilege of being a sailing vessel against the steamships, we sailed down the lines, “seeing many ships of war and the Chilean cruiser.”

Dick Denman knew something about sailing. I knew nothing, and if he were not there I had to rely on getting some expert to come with me. One of the most helpful experts for these parties was John Maude, later Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Health. He took a party of us round the Isle of Wight, when we should have been sunk off the Needles by a sudden squall that wrecked many boats along the coast. We escaped, but it proved to be my last trip with John Maude. He got engaged to be married and the young lady told him that she regarded sailing in *Irene* as too dangerous a pursuit for a lover whose intentions were serious. So I lost John Maude as captain of *Irene*, and *Irene* herself was sold for scrap and the lead off her keel in World War I.

### 3. Pursuit of Nonsense

My friends and I were amateurs of nonsense in all forms. One of our favourite forms was the vanished institution of transpontine melodrama to be found in fact on both sides of the river. At the Elephant and Castle and the Britannia, Hoxton, were served up plays with titles such as “The Bad Girl of the Family,” “Her Love Against the World,” “The Angel of his Dreams,” “White as a Lily,” “The Girl who Knew a Bit,” “The Face at the Window,” and many more.

Sometimes with one or two companions and sometimes in large parties, I was a regular patron of this art. It was drama governed by a

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moral rule as inflexible as Aristotle's Unities: vice must be crushed not once only, at the end of the play, but also at the end of each Act, at least four times in the evening. Till the rule was understood, the play might be hard to follow: the villain exposed utterly at the end of Act I would turn up debonnaire as paint at the opening of Act II; the heroine would fall for him as before, and the hero had to begin all over again to crush him.

One of the plays which I remember best was "White as a Lily" at the Britannia, which I visited with a party of sixteen. The cast of this play, described as the strongest programme in North London, included Lord Aubrey Mount-Arliston, The Hon. "Dicky" Birchenough, Eireen Beauclair (The Lily), Leah von Zalma (not so white), Bobbie and Susie (twins for comic relief), the Dowager Lady Harriet Mount-Arliston, P.C. Andover and others. Act I was "The Secret Marriage," Act II "The Poisoned Sweets," Act III "A Marriage of Dishonour," Act IV "The Portrait in the Newspapers," leading to "Found Midst Millions." The performance had unexpected features. In Act III, for instance, a fight between hero and villain in the Alps was followed not only by an avalanche but also by a display of Aurora Borealis. The Aurora Borealis is not a normal feature of Swiss mountains, but the scenery was of an ice-field, no doubt from the Polar Regions, and had an Aurora Borealis attachment. The management of the Britannia thought it would be a pity not to use this.

The advertisements on the programme were as alluring as the play. There was in Hoxton a practical ladies' tailor and costumier offering coats to measure from 9s. 11d., skirts from 4s. 11d., costumes from 15s. 11d. There was "Fred's, The Leading Toilet Saloon. No Waiting. Four Chairs. Smart, Clean and Cosy." There were refreshments in the theatre at prices to make the post-World-War-II mouth water: mild ale or porter at 1d. the glass, bitter, Burton and stout at 2d., liqueurs 4d. and 6d., "our Special Scotch 3d.," Cigars of Choicest Brand 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d., and 1s. The programme ended with the reassurance that "THIS THEATRE IS DISINFECTED WITH JEYES FLUID."

The Britannia programme mentions the "Pictures," which were just creeping in. I remember laughing more than I thought it possible to laugh at one of the first moving pictures that I saw at the Elephant and Castle. It was a line-drawing about a dog, and the high spot was when the dog, with an enormous tongue, licked all over the baby's face, and the one hair at the back of the baby's head waved with excitement as the tongue moved. We had not seen, or imagined, such absurdities before.

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We were not content merely to see melodramas. We organised sweepstakes in connection with them, drawing the characters and giving prizes to the holder of the character who was the "first to give a kiss," or the "first to say Damn" or the "first to commit a murder." When the hero was getting so near to the heroine that a kiss seemed imminent there would be shouts of encouragement from the holder of the hero in our sweepstake, and counter-cheers from the holders of other characters, such as the villain or long-lost uncle who was bound to give a kiss some time if he got the chance. Sometimes we behaved in a way shockingly inconsiderate of the actors. Today I blush to remember what we thought so funny then.

We were early amateurs of another form of nonsense, the works of Mrs. Amanda McKittrick Ros, of Larne. She was a writer with an immense power of words, but uncertain use of them. Her first novel, *Irene Iddesleigh*, starts with the heroine Irene imprisoned by her husband Sir John Dunfern in a room which "defies escape or secretion." Sir John Dunfern, disliking to go to parties, had found it "almost impossible to stare socialism in the face," though he never forgot "to share fully his cheerful conversation with his wife, when so desired, which, sorrowful to relate, was too seldom." When it became too seldom for him to bear any longer, he broke out: "Was I duped to ascend the ladder of liberty, the hill of harmony, the tree of triumph, and the rock of regard, and when wildly manifesting my act of ascension, was I to be informed of treading still in the valley of defeat?" Discovering thereafter Irene's love for another, he proceeds to the imprisonment, from which, in due course, Irene escapes to "brave the bridge of bigamy" with her former tutor Oscar Otwell, and to be denounced by her son as "woman of sin and stray companion of tutorism." At one point Sir John fell ill and one action of his illness was illustrated for me by my friend Mary Massey (later Mrs. Dudley Perceval):

Entering the room one day with a new bottle of medicine from London, Sir John Dunfern raised himself on his left elbow and said to the nurse, etc., etc.

The illustration showed Sir John in dressing-gown on the floor just within the room, clasping a bottle in his right arm and raising himself with his left arm.

*Irene Iddesleigh*, published in 1897, was followed by *Delina Delaney*, which is in some ways an even finer, if less continuous, scream. It ends with a recognition scene which for unexpectedness can have no parallel

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in literature. The hero, Lord Gifford, taken to see if he can identify a dead patient in a hospital, asks to have the bedclothes turned up: "Great God! This is my cousin Mattie Maynard. She had six toes on her right foot!" It need only be added that earlier in the story Lady Mattie, of whom Lord Gifford knew so much, had lived for years in the same house with him as an unrecognised stranger, pretending to be Madame de Maine.

*Delina Delaney*, I felt certain, would repay dramatisation, and I undertook to make a version for performance by a select company of amateurs. My version was not completed or performed, since World War I and other things intervened, but I print the opening in the Appendix of this volume.<sup>1</sup> In making the version, I took no liberties except in arrangement. Every word in it comes from Amanda herself.

Dick Denman and I were not only among the earliest readers of Amanda. We were also among the few of her readers who saw her in person. In a journey to Ireland, in August 1911, we made a pilgrimage to Larne as one of our first objects. We had no difficulty in securing an interview, which I described to my mother.

August 27, 1911.

. . . The gifted authoress opened the door to us herself, and at once welcomed us in and sat us down in her parlour while she went off to adorn herself suitably. Then she came and talked to us for an hour and a half—about her books; about her lawsuits and the lime-burning business which she inherited from an old gentleman whom she and Mr. Ros had looked after in his declining years (I am afraid the old gentleman's relatives regarded Amanda as a designing creature—hence the lawsuits); about the many distinguished persons who had bought her books (King George, she declared, had twenty-five copies and every crowned head in Europe except the German Emperor and the Czar of Russia were among her correspondents); and once again about her lawsuits and lawyers. She is a genial, large, talkative, impetuous, coarse-grained person—really somewhat remarkable in the way that she is torn between two passions—the passion for money and management and the love for writing and creating for its own sake.

Amanda had more in her than a tendency to write nonsense unconsciously for the entertainment of highbrows. Her passion for writing was as genuine as was the vigour of her mind. She described to us the delight of sitting all day in her work-room with the servant bringing up

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 4.



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her meals and leaving them outside the door, so that no one should come in to disturb her. She made phrases that stuck in the mind. Once, for instance, in a letter to Dick Denman telling of disputes with her neighbours, whom she proposed to caricature in a new novel *Prince Puke my Cousin, or Six Months in Hell*, she added that, having retrieved the manuscript from the printers, she was "revising and embittering some of its chapters." This, like the "words of cursing silence" used by Lady Mattie Maynard, or the "vaguish tutor" of Oscar Otwell, are phrases that have passed into my vocabulary. When I read some modern poetry, I wonder whether the only thing wrong with Amanda was being born a generation too soon. If the *Poems of Puncture*, on which she was engaged in 1911, had appeared in 1951, Amanda might have been acclaimed by the highbrows of today in place of being laughed at by the highbrows of her day.

By 1911, when we saw her, she had a distinguished clientele. She showed us a book sent her by Sir Edward Grey; an Omar Khayyám presented by the translator or editor (Edward Heron Allen); another book which she said came from Lord Lilford (?), and letters from various notabilities in Parliament and out of it.

Between the two wars Amanda's vogue became greater still. *Irene Iddesleigh* was reprinted by the Nonesuch Press in 1926 and the issue sold out immediately. *Delina Delaney* was reprinted in 1935, with a publisher's note describing Mrs. Ros's work as praised by such diverse authorities as Lord Oxford and Asquith, Mark Twain, Mr. E. V. Lucas and Mr. Aldous Huxley. To all this Dick Denman and I had the attitude of pioneers. We had known her and been in touch with her since 1901. We were close behind Barry Pain, who, having reviewed her in 1898, was probably the first discoverer of her art.

### 4. *Social Round and Thoughts on Woman*

Of course my friends and I pursued the social round. We had dinner-parties, serious theatre-parties, and dancing-parties galore. When we found ourselves in town on Sunday, the more dutiful of us paid formal calls. I was rewarded, on one such occasion, by meeting at Lady Lyttelton's house in Chelsea Hospital no less a personage than Henry James, and making a remark about the Ulster crisis of April 1914 which impressed him so much that he asked to have it repeated.

I had the sense to admire Henry James's work, as I did that of other established novelists. My mother gave me many volumes of Anatole France, as she gave me all of Turgenyev. My most constant companion

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in those days was Samuel Butler. Granville Barker's *Waste*, the *Electra* of Euripides, Gibbon's *Autobiography*, Babur's *Autobiography*, Stevenson's *Letters*, Meredith's *Letters*, and Browning's *Life*, are mentioned with much other reading in my letters of this time. Galsworthy appears as a rising star. E. M. Forster appears not as a star, but with the casual notice appropriate to one with whom I had been at my first preparatory school in Eastbourne. I reviewed *The Longest Journey* cavalierly.

In addition to dances of the normal type, I found myself bidden to dancing classes of special kinds, to Irish Jigs with Mary Massey, to Morris Dancing with the Charles Trevelyan's, and to the Tango at Mrs. J. R. Green's.

January 23, 1914.

I met Miss Massey and Miss Spring Rice at a Tango Class which I attended, on the distinct condition that I was not required to learn the Tango or any other dance. My objections to the Tango are that it is intellectual and earnest and dull. The class was at Mrs. J. R. Green's, and I was lured there by the promise of seeing Lord Haldane (who is a friend of hers) dance the Tango, but it was not so.

My list of objections to the Tango was an adaptation of the definition which I used to make at that time of the ideal companion for life. The ideal companion must be intelligent without being intellectual, must be keen without being earnest, must be silent without being dull. Whether or not that is a sufficient definition of the ideal companion, one has only to turn it round to get the ideal bore of either sex: "intellectual without being intelligent; earnest without being keen; dull without being silent."

I was rather given to theorising about possible companions for life. One requirement that I remember was that she should sit naturally upon a gate if she came upon one. Probably this was no more than an echo from Meredith's Carinthia Jane who sat so brilliantly up a tree. Theorising on such matters led to my writing another book.

Even at the height of my administrative work I thought of myself as, by preference, an author. In January 1910, when the labour exchanges were on the point of opening their doors, I came back from a visit to Cambridge where I had had "much interesting though economic talk," as I described it, and "inclined as a consequence to start studying for a book on the eternal subject of Socialism or the Limits of State Action and the Psychology of Individual Incentive." How I imagined that, as a civil servant, I should get permission to publish such a book if I wrote it, is hard to explain. Fortunately for my passion for authorship I found

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another subject which presented no such difficulties of permission to publish.

Those were days when the problem of Women, in general, was to the fore, the days of the suffragist and the suffragette agitations for the vote, the days of H. G. Wells's attack on the family, which led to his attack on the Webbs in *The New Machiavelli* for not diverting the Fabians from Socialism to Feminism. Even while I was working at *Unemployment* as my first book, I felt that, when that was finished, I should have to get busy about Women.

As a first step to this, in imitation of the Aristotelian method, I set about collecting opinions expressed by others about women. I found an overwhelming abundance. One day when I was walking with Stephen Tallents along the Embankment, there came to us jointly the idea that from this collection of opinions about women I might construct, as I described it to my mother, "a pleasant frivolous book which will amuse me and keep me from becoming excessively Directorial." The idea was to make an Anthology of Thoughts about Women which should illustrate a love story to be told in the Introduction. This was the origin of *John and Irene*, first mentioned in a letter to my mother on February 22, 1912. With the then incredible speed of publication the book appeared in the following September.

The story told in the Introduction was of John, an enthusiast for the cause of women in general, meeting Irene in particular, and deciding to make her a partner, not only in his private life, but also in his public campaign for Women's Rights. He got, of course, what he deserved. Irene, starting by being not a feminist at all, soon outdistanced John, and the engagement ended with a fracas in the garden. Irene ran off into the house, banging both doors behind her, while John remained to burn a book of Bernard Shaw's upon the lawn. As to the cause of the breach I confessed myself unable to give more than a guess: "Irene may have proposed a terminable arrangement; or entirely separate establishments; or she may simply have asked him for a salary as wife and mother, larger than he was able to afford." John lapsed into a state of misogyny which gave the excuse for the longest chapter of the Anthology—on "Dispraise of Women." The Anthology and the story ended, however, on a more cheerful note of hope renewed. "Women have not lost a lover, nor their cause a champion; for Irene, stepping into John's place in the ranks, has bought the library of feminist literature which he had sold, and John, who cannot dance, has again been seen at dances."

The copper beech tree under which John and Irene discoursed was

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the beech tree at Pitfold under which I spent so many talkative weekends. The solemn burning of the book of Bernard Shaw's upon the lawn was taken from my father. The book was the volume containing *Candida*; to my father's gentle soul *Candida's* outspoken hardness was revolting. And the lawn was that on which Bernard Shaw must often have sat or walked during his honeymoon. As I have related elsewhere, my parents let their Hindhead home one summer to Miss Payne Townsend for this purpose.<sup>1</sup> This contact led to Shaw's presenting my mother later with a copy of *The Perfect Wagnerite* inscribed "To the cleverest woman of my acquaintance and the wickedest in her opinions." John's mother was like my mother in exercising over "her husband's house and all its inhabitants a sway as beneficent as it was unquestioned, extending even to the number of cups of coffee to be drunk or of pipes to be smoked each day." But the story of the lovers and their quarrel was imaginary.

From the publisher's point of view *John and Irene* was a failure. Most of the reviewers, puzzled by the title of the book, vented their wrath upon it. Only my friends of the *Westminster Gazette* were really kind, deciding that on the whole the book was a novel, with the originality of being written almost wholly by others than its writer. The second kindest reviewer said that I had written an excellent book with a bad title. The British public followed the other reviewers. The time came when the unsold stock of *John and Irene* had to be pulped, all but a handful of copies retained by myself.

My mother did not like *John and Irene* any more than the reviewers did. She thought that at the age of thirty-three I should be taking an interest, not in women in general, but in one young woman in particular. I defended myself against her strictures at first as gently as I could.

March 10, 1912.

I haven't replied to your birthday letter before, because I wanted a quiet time—but now that I have it, I don't know that I can say much—except that you are as much my mother and my ideal mother to me at thirty-three as at thirty-two, thirty-one . . . and all the way back to my first remembrance. You taught me at the first and you still teach me by example to work and live, and keep alive. In growing up, as everyone must, into my own way of life, I've never grown out of feeling (and never shall, I hope, grow out of feeling) that if in any way I can be like my Father and Mother as regards all the most important points of character and attitude to life, I'll do all

<sup>1</sup> *India Called Them*, p. 350.

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that can be required of human nature. And of course I'd like you to be an ideal grandmother too—but these things are not in one's own hands.

I promised to write an Epilogue to the Anthology which would please her, by being an apology for giving so much thought to women as women, and an acknowledgment of the fact that in a healthier time of the world this would not be done; "but now we have got the disease and must go through with it." This Epilogue was never written. *John and Irene* did not run to a second edition.

A year later, when I was a year older, I found myself even more defensive and attempting to turn defence into attack by producing, for my mother, at the end of May 1913, yet another story, of one Edward and Mrs. Barton. The gist of this story was that Edward, being criticised by Mrs. Barton for not finding a wife, said that "he had been researching into the history of Robert the Bruce, and had found a new version of the story of the spider. Robert Bruce, sitting in a barn, saw a spider endeavouring to throw itself and its line across from the wall to the great central beam which upheld the whole structure. It tried, and failed, and tried, and failed again repeatedly. 'Silly creature,' said Robert the Bruce (according to Edward's new version), 'why can't you see what you ought to do? You should throw yourself across to that great beam which runs down the centre and from which your life depends.'" My mother liked this story even less than she had liked *John and Irene*. Almost certainly she destroyed the copy which I left with her—the only copy.

May 26, 1913.

I'm so sorry to have been so unsociable yesterday. I shall be down again next Sunday and shan't want to do future stories in such a hurry.

Please take the story simply as a story, and not an allegory at you. There are no originals for any of the characters, though, of course, all the thoughts of all the characters have come at times to my mind. As regards publication I'm far more anxious to write than to publish at the present stage. My main if not only, reason for publication of anything just now would be to get an outside expert opinion on the merits of the story as a story. Otherwise I have to rest content with my own conceits about it. But there are a good many reasons which will probably in any case rule out publication as a present possibility.

I don't think Edward is insulting. It's a case of self-defence under great provocation. I can make this, however, much clearer by a few

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words. After all, if Mrs. Bartons (no original for her) will go about assuming that the main reason why a man doesn't marry is in himself they must go wrong sometimes. No doubt they're very often right, and probably Mrs. Barton was quite right about Edward himself over a good part of his life. Personally, I think her talk of work and the Alps the truest thing in the story.

Please now don't be vexed with me. I'm going to stick to Labex<sup>1</sup> all right, but there are things in me which don't get satisfied with Labex alone now that Labex is only creative at rare moments. In the old days one was creating all the time.

The story of Edward, as a story, ended happily. A nice young woman who had been listening to him being politely rude to Mrs. Barton came to him and said that she much preferred the older version of the story of Robert the Bruce and the Spider. No doubt Edward took the hint and lived happily with her ever after. No young woman ever said this sort of thing to me, or if she did, I did not hear her.

I came to apply to myself the song of Diego Valdez of Rudyard Kipling:

I dreamed to wait my pleasure  
„ Unchanged my Spring would bide,  
Wherefore to wait my pleasure  
I put my Spring aside  
Till, first in face of Fortune  
And last in mazed disdain,  
I made Diego Valdez  
High Admiral of Spain.

I used to quote this about myself, with "Director of Labour Exchanges" uneuphoniously substituted for "High Admiral of Spain."

When World War I began I was thirty-five, half-way through the proverbial span of human life. It is impossible for any of us who were active before that war not to think from time to time what might have happened to us personally if there had been no war. How should we have spent the rest of our working lives? It is possible that Sidney Webb would have been able, even without a war, to give me the chance of the London School of Economics and Political Science, as he did in fact in 1919—but it is not certain. The great Sir Ernest Cassel Foundation which restarted the School was a product of the war. If the chance of the

<sup>1</sup> "Labex" was the telegraphic address of Labour Exchanges and stood for them in our daily speech.

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School had come to me, I suspect that I would have taken the chance, whatever my position in the Civil Service. If it had not come, I should have gone on in the Civil Service, and no doubt should have risen high in it, continually writing things outside, trying to be creative there, if my official work was not creative. I should have gone on seeking to exercise what the *Scotsman* reviewer of *John and Irene* described as "that style of urbane irony which in these days of bureaucratic government seems to be becoming the exclusive property of the Civil Service." What adjectives ten times more powerful than bureaucratic could the *Scotsman* reviewer have found for Government today?

"War is fatal to Liberalism," said my first master in the public service, Mr. Churchill, in one of his speeches of that time at Glasgow. War has been fatal to Liberalism as a political creed. War and its consequences have made less easy that life of intellectual work and intellectual play which came so lightly to my generation.





## *Book Two*

THROUGH WORLD WAR I  
AND ITS AFTERMATH OF ILLUSIONS



## Chapter VI

### THE MINISTRY OF MUNITIONS AND BEFORE

One sees no reason why all the nations having started war with no reason (except mutual fear) should ever stop war till one side has nothing to fear from the other.

Letter to my mother, August 3, 1914.

I SAW nothing of the fighting side of World War I till it was over and I made a short tour of battlefields. But I was in at the beginning of each of two major developments marking the change from the military wars of the past to the total wars of today. One of these developments was organisation and control by Government of our productive resources, begun by the Ministry of Munitions. The other development was organisation and control by Government of our food supplies and their use, undertaken by the Ministry of Food. I was one of the three or four officials first active in the Ministry of Munitions, and I was the first in the Board of Trade department which led to the Ministry of Food. But neither of these developments came early in the war. • The Treasury Committee on Munitions which led to the Ministry of Munitions at the end of May 1915 was established only in March, in the eighth month of war. The first Board of Trade Orders controlling food came late in November 1916; the Ministry of Food was established in the following month after nearly two and a half years of war.

To those who have lived through World War II it is hard to realise, even if they experienced also World War I, how partial for most of its length that earlier war remained. There was no conscription even for military service till January 1916. There was no Schedule of Reserved Occupations. There was never formal direction of labour. There were for most of the war two fighting services only—no Air Ministry till the end of 1917, no Royal Air Force till April 1918: the war started with the Royal Flying Corps dating from 1912 under the War Office and a Fleet Air Arm being developed independently by the Admiralty into the Royal Naval Air Service.<sup>1</sup> There was no rationing even of meat and fats till the last year of the war; there was never rationing of bread. The accepted slogan for the early years was "Business as usual." Yet it was in this war

<sup>1</sup> The creation of the Air Ministry is described in chapter lviii of the *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR I

that the vital experiments of state control of all kinds were made, in an uncharted field. And before war ended, it had become clear that for a people in peril the endurance and service of its women was as essential as that of its men. The admission of women to vote, as they voted for the first time in December 1918, came from that service, not from militancy of another kind.

For me the war began quietly, as in the main a spectator. I had to find a new home for myself in London, as Dick Denman, with whom I had been sharing 35 Campden Hill Road, had married again in June and needed that house to himself. But finding houses in London in 1914 was simple. By early October I was settled in the ideal small house at 27 Bedford Gardens, with ample service; none of my own time and energy went in domestic chores till after World War II. I had arranged to revisit Nauheim for a second heart cure in August, and as late as July 27 was writing to my mother urging her to come with me. I took the cure artificially in London during October; the few early war tasks falling to the exchanges were over or well in hand. They consisted of sending out two sets of statistical returns and arranging supplies of labour to the War Office and the Admiralty for temporary special purposes.

The exchanges furnished the Government for the first time with an organisation covering the country and available for odd jobs. As part of the War Book planning they were used to collect returns from firms of the numbers and types of persons employed by them, and returns of food supplies and prices in all parts of the country. The first set of returns on Form Z8 continued and were expanded; they became the background of much planning. The second set of returns were abandoned, as fear of local famines vanished under business as usual.

The labour exchanges under the Ministry of Labour today are an established part of the administrative machine. Before World War I, under the Board of Trade, they were on trial. Those concerned with the exchanges were more than a little pleased, as the prospect of war in Europe increased, to find both the fighting services looking to them for help. The War Office concerted a secret arrangement with our Divisional Officer of the south-west for help in getting the Expeditionary Force away; saddlers, blacksmiths, bakers and others were marked down in Midland and Western towns, to be sent converging on Aldershot on receipt of the starting telegrams. The Admiralty came in later, with requests for shipyard workers to be sent to dockyards for hastening completion of ships and for repairing the anticipated war damage. A remark made to me at the end of July 1914 by one of the Admiralty high-ups may stand

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as an example of mistaken judgment. He did not see how the war at sea could last more than a few months, since the rival fleets would blow one another out of the water. He did not think it worth while for the Navy to go on with ships that could not be ready for commissioning within a year.

The scheme of labour for the Expeditionary Force went through like clockwork, though not without danger at one point of getting ahead of time. Our headquarters officer in charge of this scheme was Umberto Wolff; he was to start the clock on a message from the War Office. On August 3, just before luncheon, he ran to my room in great excitement. He had rung up his opposite number in the War Office and had been told to "carry on"; this meant that he was to send out the telegrams for action; the war was on. I said that if he was sure that the War Office answer meant this, he should proceed. I walked out to luncheon across the Horse Guards Parade and on the way I reflected. Wolff was an excitable creature; "carry on" was a phrase of more than one possible meaning. Arrived at my club I rang up Wolff and told him to find out for certain what his War Office friend meant by "carry on." I returned from luncheon to find, as I had suspected, that to the War Office carrying on meant standing by. Wolff had all but started the war, so far as he was concerned, a day too soon. When it did start, the labour exchanges played their part of one day correctly for the Expeditionary Force.

Collaboration with the dockyards went on longer; for some weeks Stephen Tallents organised an all-night service in the Central Office of Labour Exchanges for directing movements of men. But this made no call on me. I was present, as a spectator, at the birth of the Sugar Commission, of which I was to know a good deal later, in the Home Office of all unlikely places. Reginald McKenna, the Home Secretary, had become excited by fear of a sugar famine and had been buying quantities of sugar without any authority. I went with Llewellyn Smith to a meeting with him one August night which resulted in the drafting of a Bill that passed through all its stages in Parliament on the following day. As we walked away from the meeting, I remember Llewellyn Smith saying to me: "What possible chance have the Germans got?" Those were the days when we believed in the Russian steam-roller.

A few sentences from letters to my mother give the mood.

August 3, 1914.

The whole thing . . . is an incredible nightmare come true. I can't of course, like most of us I imagine, help feeling relieved that apparently we are to join in (because it seems necessary and in a sense our duty)

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but it's all against the grain with me to go against Germans with French and Russians. I can only hope that if we do go in we shall understand and that the Germans will also understand that there is no rancour in it, and that our readiness will always be for an early peace. For apart from that one sees no reason why all the nations having started war with no reason (except mutual fear) should ever stop war till one side has nothing to fear from the other.

August 13, 1914.

Everybody in the country is falling over everybody else in an endeavour to help, and nobody quite knows who ought to do what. . . . Some days I work (or talk) till dinner-time or after. Others I finish at five or six.

August 31, 1914.

Just now I've been saying good-bye to one of our L.E. Chiefs of Section who (with four or five Oxford contemporaries) is now a private in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (I think). He would not have been allowed to go, but that he was leaving us for another office in any case, and they agreed to let him go. Everyone else in the office is wildly jealous.

The first thing in my life that has made me feel really old is that I should be past the age—and unfit.

We went to see the *Irene* yesterday—lying unmasted on the mud. We shall try to sell her next year.

September 23, 1914.

I've a lot of miscellaneous work to do—not particularly important or exciting, but enough to keep me for fairly long hours, and leave me reposeful in the evenings. We chiefly do odd jobs—help a little with recruiting; help a little with relief; help a little with supplies of timber and pit-props; concern ourselves a little with refugees and so on. It would be more satisfactory to have one biggish job, but that can't be helped.

Four out of eight Divisional Officers have now gone off for military service, and about 500 out of a male staff of all ages of about 3,000. Another 100, who are ex-non-commissioned officers and are therefore specially badly needed, will probably also go. So we're working rather short-handed, as regards skilled staff, and doing rather well by the military departments of the State.

The biggish job, for my Department as for myself, began to materialise in the following March. In the meantime, to my heart-cure

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for myself were added two private concerns. My mother, coming in October to stay in my new house, found herself at seventy-two let in for a major abdominal operation; it succeeded wholly and gave her another fourteen years and more of very active life. My father at seventy-seven became a Special Constable in London and was set to guarding gas or water works at Shepherd's Bush; as he continued to live at Hindhead, each spell of duty meant for him two miles' walk each way to and from his country station and two hours each way of railway journey added to his watching hours. Secret intervention with the police authorities enabled me to secure that after a few months my father was placed honourably on the reserve list and told to keep his truncheon so as to be ready for a call.

Meanwhile, not being called on for more serious things, I invented a war game and an appeal to women to replace men and set them free for military service.

February 25, 1915.

I went with J. yesterday to see Jaques and Son (the principal producers of games) to talk about our naval war game. It was rather entertaining—rather like publishing a book. Mr. Jaques was mortally afraid of giving the public anything that required them to use their brains or couldn't be explained by a shop assistant to a prospective purchaser in three sentences. His passion for something absolutely childish was amazing. However I left him and J. playing the game and I think he is interested and will publish it—if we agree on terms.

March 17, 1915.

I've been plotting a great campaign to get all the women who can take any sort of paid employment to register on a "Special Register of Women for War Service" at the Labour Exchanges so as to get more men released for enlistment and more equipment. It'll all be in the papers tomorrow. I spent yesterday interviewing representatives of all sorts of women's societies—Mrs. Creighton, Mrs. Despard, the Mothers' Union, Mrs. Dacre Fox (W.S.P.U.), the Women's Co-operative Guild, etc., etc. I expect to make a great splash tomorrow and hope that we may get a little useful work done. But, of course, I don't know.

The naval war game was published in a simplified form, under the name of "Swish." It embodied an idea—a submarine move—which so far as I know is original and not paralleled in any other game.

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The War Services Register showed ample supply of women, but not yet an effective demand. The changes of official and industrial organisation necessary for this were still in the future, though the first steps had been taken. The launching of the appeal to women to offer war service in industry coincided with the attempt to make room for them by the Treasury Conference with the Trade Unions on March 17 to 19, and with the beginning of my concern with munitions.

At the outbreak of war, R. B. Haldane, under pressure of public opinion stimulated by a campaign against him in certain papers, had been replaced as Secretary of State for War by Lord Kitchener; it is sufficient commentary on the nature of such Press campaigns, that at the end of the war Haldane received from the Commander of our forces—Douglas Haig—a copy of his despatches inscribed to "Viscount Haldane of Cloan—the greatest Secretary of State for War England has ever had."<sup>1</sup> Kitchener issued an appeal for immediate enlistment of 100,000 men and followed this by further appeals; by November 1914 the House of Commons was voting money for the second million. The Master-General of Ordnance, General Von Donop, set out to provide the guns, shells and rifles needed for these millions by the traditional method of placing orders with a few large armament firms.

By the end of 1914 it was becoming clear, outside the War Office, that traditional methods would not provide the arms required. The armament firms were always ready to sign new contracts for additional supplies, but they did not command the labour needed to deliver the goods in any reasonable time. The first action of the Cabinet, towards the end of 1914, was to tell the Board of Trade, as the department then in charge of labour questions, to increase the supply of men for armaments. The Board of Trade, having used all the men on the labour exchange registers, canvassed engineering firms throughout the country inviting them to release men for the armament factories. The chief result was to provoke a vigorous demand from the firms canvassed that, in place of surrendering men, they should be allowed to tender for contracts. The War Office did not like this; they thought making of armaments a specialised job beyond the power of any but the established armament firms. The Board of Trade met this by suggesting that samples of some of the simpler shells and fuses should be exhibited in the principal engineering centres, so that the outside firms should know what they were expected to produce. The Board for months had been helping the War

<sup>1</sup> See *Richard Burdon Haldane—An Autobiography*, p. 288 (Hodder and Stoughton, 1929).



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Office to find additional supplies of clothing, food and other things required by the Quartermaster-General for the new millions. They persuaded and bullied the Master-General of Ordnance to let them have a try with the simpler armaments. The first exhibition of sample shells and fuses was opened on March 10, 1915, after eight months of war. By that time it was clear that the British Army facing the German Army in Belgium and France had nothing like the same number and variety of arms.

By that time also the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, was taking a hand publicly on munitions. On March 9, in the House of Commons, he proclaimed the need for a "good strong business man with push and go in him" to organise the production of munitions on an unprecedented scale. On March 17 to 19 he attacked the problem on the other side—that of labour—by holding a three-day conference with the trade unions designed to secure relaxation of restrictions on output and on types of labour to be employed. I came into this, because the Board of Trade was then the Ministry concerned with labour and, within the Board of Trade, the Labour Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance Department had outgrown all rivals. Accompanying the Permanent Secretary, Llewellyn Smith, I sat through the Treasury Conference. In its adjournments I went off with him to draft the agreement that we desired from the Conference. In due course the Treasury Agreement was made: it provided for relaxation of trade union restrictions strictly for the period of the war and after prescribed consultations. Every relaxation was to be recorded, so that the restriction could be restored when the war ended. The largest of the trade unions concerned—the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, precursor of the present Amalgamated Engineering Union—was not represented in the main Treasury Conference. The A.S.E. demanded and secured a special conference for themselves a week later on March 24 to 25, and made the same kind of agreement with an additional condition: that relaxation of trade practices should be required only in relation to work for war purposes. This condition, accepted by Lloyd George then and confirmed a year later on February 24, 1916, had unfortunate consequences when shortage of manpower became a dominating factor in the war.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time further developments of importance took place. On the one hand Lloyd George's speech of March 9 led to the appoint-

<sup>1</sup> See *Ministry of Munitions History* (cited henceforth as *M.M.H.*), Vol. VI, Part I, p. 45, for the pledge by Lloyd George; pp. 54 *seq.* for resulting need for an amending Munitions of War Bill to secure dilution on private work; and p. 120 for withdrawal of the dilution clause by Mr. Churchill as Minister of Munitions in August 1917 after the end of the Engineers' Strike.

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ment not of one man but of two men of push and go: Mr. George Booth selected by the Secretary of War and Sir Percy Girouard selected by the Chancellor, as a counterblast.

On the other hand, a Munitions of War Committee with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Chairman was established and held its first meeting on April 12. Llewellyn Smith was co-opted to the Committee and I became a sort of extra member attending all its meetings:

There was indeed an idea that I should be secretary of it, but I am a little too high in rank for that really, and Wolff is doing that work instead. I'm not really doing much work in connection with the Committee—I'm rather on the fringe of the centre of things than at the centre itself—but it takes time. And, of course, it's very interesting.

So I wrote to my mother at the end of April 1915. The Committee sat from April 12 to May 13. Almost the only thing that I remember today from it is a remark made to me by Von Donop as we walked away from a meeting at which Lloyd George had asked for statistical returns. "I'll get him the figures," said Von Donop, "but they will delay production of shells for two days. The statistics are absolutely secret, known only to me. I'll have to spend two days with a slide rule on them myself, instead of getting on with my job." This was the organisation with which we faced Germany at the outset of World War I.

In May the Liberal Government with which we had entered the war ran into crisis, through resignation of Lord Fisher of his post as First Sea Lord. On May 19 the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, announced in the House of Commons the forthcoming reconstruction of the Government on a broader basis. On May 26 came announcement of a Coalition Government with Lloyd George as Minister of Munitions. Llewellyn Smith became General Secretary of the Ministry of Munitions and I became Assistant General Secretary, with special reference to labour and general office organisation. This meant building up a new department and housing it. No. 6 Whitehall Gardens, where Gladstone had lived at one time, was placed at our disposal.

I began by competing with Eric Geddes (recommended by Arthur Balfour to Lloyd George on a scrap of paper at a Committee on Imperial Defence) for the best bedroom in No. 6, as an office to work in, and he, of course, won; I went below. Llewellyn Smith said to me once that if one gave Eric Geddes a job he would get it done, but he would probably break so many other things on the way to his goal that you wouldn't

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feel certain that the job was worth the price. But Geddes, with all the business and production side of the new Ministry, went over soon to Armament Buildings and Lloyd George followed to the Hotel Metropole, leaving us in possession of Whitehall Gardens, for the Secretariat and for the department of Munitions Labour.

There we grew fantastically. We had to start by taking over 80,000 letters offering help to save the country, which had poured in on the two men of push and go. Before long we found ourselves dealing with a fresh mail of 10,000 letters a day. To house the typists and the registry, we began by covering the garden with a vast marquee. Thereafter I ordered a new temporary building each Friday evening and expected to find it in position on Monday. Early in June, I imported J. to sit in a small tent of her own on the terrace outside my window and attach or adjust stock answers to the 80,000. She had offered herself dutifully at a labour exchange in response to my appeal for women for war service, and when summoned for interview took with her, as requested, letters from various distinguished friends saying what they thought of her. The interviewing officer told her with a smile that he was not yet looking for a Prime Minister.

With my 80,000 letters she enjoyed herself hugely. She liked perhaps best of all the butcher in Jamaica who understood that we were having "some trouble in Middle Europe" and "could he be of service" to us? She wrote sympathetically to the young woman in Isle of Man who had seen a German prisoner at exercise and fallen in love with him and wanted permission to meet him. She treasured a complaint from a Scandinavian merchant in Porto Rico to an English manufacturer of pumping machinery, opened and copied by the Postal Censor's office:

Gentlemen,

i got he pump which i by from you, but wy for gods sake you doan send me no handle I loose to me my customer wats the use a pump wen she doan have no handle, shure i think you doan treat me rite i wrote 10 days, and my customer he holler for water like hell from the pump you no he is hot summer now and the win he no blow the pump. She got no handle, so what the hel i goan to do with it doan send me a handle pretty quick, i send her back and I goan order some pump from Mayer's Companie. Goodbye.

Yours truly,

Since i write this i find the goddam handle in the box excuse to me. The Censorship at times deserved our thanks.

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I had started in the Ministry of Munitions with two young men of the Civil Service as private secretaries. Naturally they wanted to leave, and did leave, for military service as soon as they could. I took J. out of her tent to become my private secretary with two young women to help her. This was the beginning of our lasting collaboration in public work of many kinds.

The Ministry of Munitions has had its history written in 12 volumes, by outside experts with access to the documents. Though this history has not been published for sale, it is accessible to the public in a dozen or more libraries. The Ministry has been described also by its creator in his War Memoirs. Here I need add only such personal experiences as seem relevant to my general theme.

"The Ministry of Munitions was from first to last a business-man organisation."<sup>1</sup> So the creator of the Ministry described it later. The description was true no doubt of the larger half of the Ministry concerned with the Munitions Supply—the placing of contracts, the establishing and managing of new factories and so on. How far it was true of such departments as those concerned with Munitions Design or Finance or Inspection I cannot say. It was not true of Munitions Labour as we began. We had some business men. In the main we began with civil servants; we were reinforced largely by a stream of academics and intellectuals; even the civil servants whom we borrowed from other departments had often an academic flavour. I have given in the Appendix the names of some of those who helped to build up Munitions Labour or man the Secretariat of the Ministry.<sup>2</sup>

We launched many schemes for increasing labour supply for munitions: War Munition Volunteers; issue of War Service Badges to men who would be more useful in industry than by enlisting; Release from Colours of skilled engineers who had been swept into the Kitchener Armies. The most difficult and critical side was not supply of labour but regulation of labour. It had become clear that we could not win the war by business as usual, that is to say without organising a large part of our industrial production to serve war aims. The question arose whether we could win the war by labour as usual, leaving untouched the traditional freedom of all men to choose and leave their jobs, to bargain as to the terms of employment, to use the strike weapon as an instrument in bargaining. With industrial service become as essential for our survival

<sup>1</sup> *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, New Edition, Vol. I, p. 147 (Odhams, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, Section 5.

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as military service was, could we get through without a large measure of war discipline in industry?

For two years and more, in answering this question in the negative, I became a much hissed villain in what I described later as "the bitter drama of Munitions Labour," with its "strange cold quibbling about trade union customs by unimaginative men whose fellows' lives for want of guns and shells were forfeit, who would often have given their own lives without a murmur."<sup>1</sup>

The background to this drama was that World War I never came to Britain as World War II came, as physical destruction of cities and homes. There was never a time in World War I when Britain stood alone. There was never a flight from Dunkirk. The unimaginative men had some excuse for quibbling.

The first Minister of Munitions was not without imagination. In his earliest speech as Minister, on June 3, 1915, at Manchester, he proclaimed the need for industrial compulsion, if the millions who had offered themselves freely for military service were to be armed to meet the enemy.

I say to those who wish to dismiss conscription for the time being as a means of levying armies for fighting abroad: "You ought not thereby to assume that it is unnecessary in enabling us to mobilise the industrial strength of this country." (Cheers.)

We were the worst organised nation in this country for war.

The employers are now under the Defence of the Realm Act, practically subject to complete State control for industrial purposes. If we are to make the best of our resources for winning or for shortening the war, the same principles must extend to the whole field of industrial organisation, whether it be capital or labour. There must be but one reservation, that the State control of labour must be for the benefit of the State and not for increasing the profits of any industrial or private organisation. (Cheers.)

With regard to labour, two things are . . . essential. The first is that we must increase the mobility of labour, and the second is that we must have greater subordination in labour to the direction and control of the State. . . .

The enlisted workman cannot choose his locality of action. He cannot say, "Well, I am quite prepared to fight at Neuve Chapelle but I don't want to fight at Festubert, and I am not going near the place they call

<sup>1</sup> See *British Food Control*, p. 334.

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‘Wipers.’” (Laughter.) He cannot say, “Well, I have been to the trenches ten hours and a half, and my trade union won’t allow me to work more than ten hours.” (Cheers.) . . . The veteran who has been seven years at the job, seven years in the Army, cannot say “Who is this fellow by my side—this mere fledgling? He has only just had a few weeks’ training, and it is against my union’s regulations, and I am off.” (Laughter.) Oh no. When the house is on fire, questions of procedure or precedents or etiquette and time and division of labour disappear. (Cheers.) You cannot say that you are not liable to service at three o’clock in the morning. The fire is on, you don’t choose the hour.<sup>1</sup>

The Minister repeated this doctrine unequivocally six months later in the House of Commons when he was asked to recant his Manchester speech.

I do not recede from a single word I said then. . . . I still say that the State ought to have the right, in any great emergency where the life of the nation depends upon it, to demand the services, the wealth and the resources of every citizen. . . . Why is no Munitions Act required in France? Because they, being a perfectly democratic state, have taken the other and wider view, that they have the right to commandeer every source, every power, life, limb, wealth and everything else for the interest of the State. That is why you have no Munitions Act there. The Munitions Act is an alternative to that. . . . It is purely an expedient because you have not adopted the wider principle. . . . It is said it is an interference with liberty. So is every law. . . . The only point is whether it is essential in the interests of the State at this moment. I have not the faintest doubt that it is absolutely essential.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the instruction given to us officials in June 1915. We were told to draft a measure of industrial compulsion and discipline: it seemed to us fair to do so.

The Munitions of War Bill introduced on June 23 provided for declaring establishments as “controlled,” with the consequence that in them profits were limited for the employer, while idleness, bad time-keeping, and restriction of output became, for the employees, offences for which penalties might be inflicted by Munitions Tribunals; the Courts of Referees already established for unemployment insurance were adapted to this new function. To reduce constant change of employment

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, June 4, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, December 15, 1915, col. 2123.

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from one job to another, with its loss of output, the Bill provided that a person who left munitions work in one place of employment could not be engaged by another employer unless he had a leaving certificate. The Bill prohibited lockouts or strikes on munitions work and authorised the Minister by proclamation to extend this prohibition to any industry.

The Bill passed through the House of Commons during the last week of June, with full Parliamentary procedure and discussion of amendments—a terrific task. It was lucky that I and others in my Department had experience of legislation. It was lucky that one of these—Wolff—who, from being secretary to the Munitions of War Committee, proceeded for a while to the personal entourage of Lloyd George, had not lasted long in the Minister's favour. He was back with me for the Munitions of War Bill and his quickness of mind can never have been tested more highly. We had masses of amendments in the paper every morning, with notes and answers on all of them to be circulated to Ministers by midday or before. The spectacle of Wolff keeping three shorthand typists in continuous action simultaneously while he dictated as fast as he could speak (except when he ran to consult me on a knotty point) is one that I do not forget.

The Bill became law on July 2, 1915, and had an early, unhappy trial. The prohibition of strikes and lockouts as first drafted had been wide, but the Mining and Cotton Trade Unions had asked that it should be narrowed; they declared that they were quite capable of preventing stoppages themselves. Their demand was met by leaving them formally out of the Act, while retaining power to the Minister to proclaim a lock-out or strike in any industry and so make it illegal. Early in June a dispute arose in South Wales; on July 13 the Minister of Munitions used the power reserved to him to proclaim a strike there; but the strike proceeded from July 15 to 20, when it was ended after a visit to Cardiff of three members of the Cabinet—Lloyd George himself, Walter Runciman and Arthur Henderson. The coalowners placed themselves unreservedly in the hands of the Government. The men in effect obtained nearly everything they had demanded: "The strike demonstrated the impotence of legal provisions for compulsory arbitration where a large body of obstinate men were determined to cease work rather than surrender their claims."<sup>1</sup>

This experience was repeated often. There were many strikes on munition work itself, culminating in the Engineers' Strike of May 1917, which involved nearly 200,000 men and a loss of 1,500,000 working days

<sup>1</sup> *M.M.H.*, Vol. IV, Part II, p. 9.

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at one of the most dangerous moments of the war. There was never any serious attempt to enforce the penalties of the Munitions Act against strikers in the mass. The settlement of the Engineers' Strike of 1917 included barring of any victimisation of those who had incited it or taken part. The practical upshot of this strike was that the A.S.E. obtained the most important concession they had asked for in regard to the Munitions of War Act without giving anything for which the Government had asked.<sup>1</sup>

In September 1915 I had to prepare material for another speech by the Minister, to be given at the Trades Union Congress in Bristol. While doing this I had my first experience of an air-raid by a Zeppelin. I had come back that day from a holiday in the Quantocks with my parents, and after dinner went to work with J. on notes for the Bristol speech. As we worked in one of the temporary buildings in the garden, a messenger put his head into the room and told us to draw the blinds as a Zeppelin was on the way. Almost immediately we heard the gun on our Ministry roof start firing; rushing out we saw the Zeppelin in the light of our searchlights—floating, it appeared, over the dock region. Guns were going off everywhere and I thought to myself: it must get hit. How foolish I was I realised later. It was far out of range of our bombardment, and it cannot have been incommoded by the drawing down of blinds. How amateurish all this seems today! Very soon the Zeppelin vanished. We finished our speech-notes and handed them in at 11 Downing Street.

I have no copy of the notes now and cannot say what they contained. But I have no doubt that they suggested some at least of what *The Times* called "Lloyd George's plain words to Labour" next day at Bristol, and that they contained most of the specific cases of restriction on output and dilution which he threw at the Congress as breaches of the bargain made at the Treasury Conference. There was for instance a resolution of Woolwich Engineers refusing to admit semi-skilled men to do the work of mechanics; a refusal at Birmingham to let textile millwrights set up machinery; fining of an ironfounder £1 for working too fast; interference with Belgians for working too hard, and so on and so on.

According to the Special Correspondent of *The Times* at Bristol, Lloyd George's speech "came as a severe shock to the Congress. Unfortunately the organisations of engineers against whom the charges chiefly lie were practically unrepresented at the Congress; and it is only just to the delegates to say that the facts came as a complete surprise to the majority of them. Their perturbation was unmistakable." The

<sup>1</sup> See *M.M.H.*, Vol. VI, Part I, p. 120.



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Special Correspondent went on to attribute the charges to the evidence of "disinterested officials"; to this their significance was due.<sup>1</sup> A year later, at the next Trades Union Congress in Birmingham one of the delegates made the same attribution of authorship for the charges, with a different adjective for the authors. "Behind the Minister was a sinister crowd of Civil Servants who put those charges into his mouth—the Labour Exchange crowd, Mr. Beveridge, Llewellyn Smith and the rest. Every employer with whom it was necessary to negotiate threw these charges in the teeth of the unions."<sup>2</sup> This delegate was Ernest Bevin, still a minor light in the trade union world.

The most continuously unpopular part of the Act was Clause 7—the leaving certificate clause. It prohibited any employer from engaging a workman who within the last six weeks had been engaged on munitions work elsewhere, unless he held a certificate from his former employer or from a munitions tribunal on appeal agreeing to his leaving. The intention was to tie a workman on munitions work to his present employer, unless the workman could satisfy his employer or a munitions tribunal that he had good reason for leaving. In principle this was unexceptionable, if there was to be industrial discipline at all. Lloyd George's only objection to Clause 7 when he saw it in draft was its fixing of six weeks only as the period of compulsory idleness for a man who left without a certificate; he wanted three months and was rather angry when by misunderstanding the shorter period was retained.<sup>3</sup> In Parliament the clause went through almost unnoticed and would have done so wholly but for criticisms made on it by Mr. Pringle to an impatient House.

As soon as Clause 7 became law, trouble began. Employers were slow to understand that if they did not want a workman any longer they should give a certificate that would free him for work elsewhere. Some employers used the clause deliberately to punish workmen by suspending or dismissing them and at the same time refusing certificates. The leaving certificates formed a main subject of discussion between the Minister and the trade unions when a Bill to amend the Munitions of War Act was on the stocks in November 1915:

It might seem hard that a workman could not leave one shop to go to another, but the same restriction applied to the soldier who objected to storm the Hohenzollern Redoubt and would prefer to go to some

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, September 13, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, September 6, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> The authority for this is in a note made by myself in February 1919 in comment on the first draft of the Ministry of Munitions History.

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place behind the fighting line. If this war was a just war, if we were fighting for humanity and for the overthrow of the domination of a military caste in Europe, it was not for men to stand out at such a time for the right to leave one shop to go to another when the whim seized them.

So the Minister affirmed the principle of the clause after six months of trial.<sup>1</sup> By that time I was convinced that application of war-time industrial discipline should not be left in the hands of one party to the wage-bargain—the employer. When the amending Bill was being prepared I proposed accordingly that the administration of compulsory powers under the Munitions of War Act should be withdrawn from employers and transferred to independent officers. A Labour Officer should be appointed for each factory or group of factories, who alone should have power, with the help of a workmen's committee, to authorise prosecutions under the Act and to grant or refuse leaving certificates. But this proposal found no favour at the time.<sup>2</sup> The Government contented themselves with minor amendments of the leaving certificate clause. Eighteen months later they abolished leaving certificates entirely.<sup>3</sup> Lloyd George's simile of the Hohenzollern Redoubt was discarded. But this happened long after I had left the stage of Munitions Labour.

In introducing the Munitions of War Amendment Bill of December 1915 the Minister had stuck to his principles. In practice, as he said, the Bill consisted wholly of concessions.<sup>4</sup> It had a relatively smooth passage in the House of Commons. Owing to the nature of Peers, it had an even easier passage through the Upper House. Since the Ministry of Munitions had no regular representatives there, its pilotage was undertaken by Lord Newton, who came to be briefed by me. As I was not available immediately, J., who had now taken charge of my private secretaries, undertook to explain the Bill to him, as she was fully qualified to do. Lord Newton listened with attention and came back for more. But in the end he confessed himself beaten by the complexities of controlled establishments, leaving certificates and the like. On the last visit, just before he had to go into action, he observed to J.: "The Lords are gentlemen. They will not expect me to understand the Bill."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd George on November 30, 1915, addressing a Trade Union Conference on the Munitions of War Amendment Bill.

<sup>2</sup> According to my note of February 1919 on the Ministry of Munitions History, Llewellyn Smith doubted the possibility of getting sufficient discreet Labour Officers.

<sup>3</sup> By the Munitions of War Amendment Act of 1917 passed on August 21. A month before, Mr. Churchill had succeeded Dr. Addison as Minister of Munitions.

<sup>4</sup> *Hansard*, December 17, 1915.

<sup>5</sup> In Lords on January 11, 13 and 19, 1916.

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It was one thing to make concessions in a Bill. It was another thing to get peace and dilution in the factories. On Christmas Day 1915 the Minister addressed a large meeting in Parkhead, Glasgow, on the need for dilution of labour. The audience received 4s. a head as lost time for attendance; the proceedings were private, with reporters excluded. Nevertheless the *Forward*, a local paper of the Left, published a lengthy account of the meeting, speeches and questions and all. The Minister under Defence of the Realm powers ordered suppression of the *Forward*. A challenge to this action being threatened in the House of Commons, I found myself called out from watching a pantomime at Drury Lane with j. and a troop of children, to prepare a brief for the Minister in defence of his action. It was intimated to me that I must find reasons for suppression of the *Forward* other than the reporting of the Parkhead meeting. I went laboriously through the back files of the *Forward* and collected a number of passages inciting to unrest, which appeared technically to contravene Defence of the Realm Regulations. I gave my brief, not very enthusiastically, to the Minister's secretary, and went to hear the debate from the official gallery.<sup>1</sup> I received a more than liberal education. Lloyd George did not use my brief at all; he judged, no doubt rightly, that technical breaches of law would cut no ice. Fortunately the *Forward* was not the only Left-wing paper then published in Glasgow. There was also the *Vanguard*, which had made unpleasant personal attacks on the King and the Royal Family. Lloyd George made great play with the *Vanguard*. "This is the sort of thing that hon. members opposite wish to see published. I say No!" And the House said it with him. As *Hansard* shows, Lloyd George found plenty to say about the *Forward* also. But the impression he left on my memory was that of defending the suppression of one paper in the main by attacking a different paper. It was a Parliamentary triumph exceeding in dexterity the trick cycling which I had just seen at Drury Lane.

The growth of munitions work raised questions of wages as well as of discipline. A "Committee on Production" appointed early in February 1915 was on February 23 constituted an Arbitration Tribunal for all Government work. As the work of arbitration grew, the Committee asked the Cabinet for a ruling of principle: Should they try to hold money wage rates steady or should they let wages rise with the rising demand for labour? In due course the Committee and we of the Ministry of Munitions set out to discover what the Cabinet had decided on the question put to them. There being no secretary to the Cabinet

<sup>1</sup> January 10, 1916.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR I

then, and no minutes kept, the only way was to ask the Prime Minister or another member of the Cabinet. To make sure, we asked three separate Ministers what had been decided and we received three different answers: (1) that the Arbitration Tribunal was to hold wages; (2) that the Arbitration Tribunal was not to hold wages; (3) that the Cabinet had reached no decision at all. We chose the answer that seemed to us most desirable in the national interest—the first of the three. The Committee on Production were told by an instruction of November 1915 to keep wages from rising. “His Majesty’s Government have come to the conclusion that in view of the present emergency any further advance in wages (other than advances following automatically from existing agreements) should be strictly confined to the adjustment of local conditions where such adjustments are proved to be necessary.”

In regard to wages of women the Ministry, at an early stage, found itself driven to direct action. A famous circular L.2 issued in October 1915 prescribed the wages to be paid to women employed on munitions work not previously recognised as women’s work; the standard time rate was put at £1 a week. Another circular L.3 issued at the same time dealt with semi-skilled and unskilled men brought in to do work recognised in the past as skilled. The issue of these circulars was probably the main achievement of the Central Munitions Labour Supply Committee which held its first meeting under the Chairmanship of Arthur Henderson on September 22, 1915. I was a member of this Committee till May 1916, but with the appointment at the end of November 1915 of Gideon Murray, later Master of Elibank, as Director-General of Recruiting for Munitions work with a whole department under him, my activity on the Committee diminished. By March 1916 I was asking to be relieved of my membership of the Committee. I no longer had any contact with its work except on wages, and that also soon left me.

I was moving back already from munitions to my regular department of the Board of Trade. In that department we had made one interesting experiment in getting industrial work performed under conditions of discipline. This was the Dock Battalion at Liverpool, invented and managed by Ronald Williams, one of the original Divisional Officers of Labour Exchanges. The men, 1,200 in number, were all fully enlisted and subject to military discipline. I went to see them at work in April 1916 and described to my mother by letter some of the things that I saw:

... On Friday I attended an Orderly Room and heard Williams give a docker fourteen days confinement in cells for failure to be regular

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at work! It's very astonishing for a docker, who has been accustomed to apply for work or not as he felt inclined from day to day. Most of the men are by now disciplined and the battalion works with quite remarkable regularity—entirely disproving the theory that the average docker is physically incapable of doing more than two days' work a week, so that it is a kindness on the part of the employer to employ him casually.

The colonel in command of the battalion is Lord Derby (who was there on Saturday morning, though not on Friday), but naturally Williams does the work, and has eight or nine officers (mostly over-age business men from Liverpool) working under him. Besides being a military unit, the battalion is really a large business—the employment of 1,200 men in loading and unloading ships. On Saturday I saw something of the battalion at work.

I started Saturday by getting up at 5.45 a.m., was taken in the battalion motor down to the headquarters (one of the Liverpool Labour Exchanges just outside the docks) and saw the men mustered at 6.30 and marched out in gangs to their work, under the charge of the non-commissioned officers. . . . Then came a trial of three men for trying to steal some khaki overcoats which were being shipped to the Serbians—Lord Derby imprisoned two and let one off, as the evidence was inconclusive. (All this is just like what you read of in *The First Hundred Thousand* )

Then I was taken out to see the men at work. They do almost entirely Government work—sugar, meat for the Army, ammunition, supplies of all sorts to Russia. The last is the most interesting to see. I was taken round several immense sheds filled with every conceivable sort of supply labelled "Arch. angel" and "for Russia." There were shells in quantities, hand grenades, radiators for heating huts, steel rods, gas helmets, torpedoes, odd bits of machinery, and finally fifty or sixty armoured motor-cars. Very strange creatures these last—with revolving turrets at the back for machine-guns, and so thoroughly protected in front that the driver has only the narrowest possible crack through which to see. He can't see backwards (to reverse) at all, and has to reverse by the aid of a mirror. These cars have been waiting at Liverpool for months; they could not get through before Archangel was closed for the winter, and must wait till it is open again.

When this letter was written in the spring of 1916, Walter Runciman as President of the Board had asked already to have more of Llewellyn

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Smith's time and of mine. To relieve Llewellyn Smith, Edmund Phipps was brought in from the Board of Education, to share with him the duties of the General Secretary at the Munitions Ministry. My position in the Board of Trade was reconstituted in May 1916 with larger scope, and in June I found myself in the Birthday Honours List as a C.B. As I explained to my mother, this recognition came from the Board of Trade rather than from the Ministry of Munitions. But however it came it was pleasant to get a good mark "which puts me up the scale of precedence far above the elder sons of the younger sons of peers and only just below the Masters in Lunacy! (This is a fact.)"

In the Board of Trade we always had in mind the prospect that the war would end some day. I possess still a bulky file of memoranda composed in December 1914; one of them begins by describing as an "urgent need" comprehensive consideration of the problems which will arise when the labour market is flooded after demobilisation. For December 1914 this was rather previous and suggests that either Llewellyn Smith or I was insufficiently employed. For some time thereafter neither of us had leisure for such games. But, with the Ministry of Munitions in full stride, planning for after the war bobbed up again. In the spring of 1916 I was told, among other things, to make plans for dealing with unemployment after the war. One immediate fruit of this was a Bill to extend to all munition workers the limited scheme of unemployment insurance under Part II of the National Insurance Act of 1911. The term "munition work" had been interpreted widely in a famous judgment of Mr. Justice Atkin; the new Bill gave power by order to go further still. The Bill, as I have related elsewhere, had a curious history.<sup>1</sup> Passed practically without discussion in Parliament it was violently and successfully opposed by solid combination of both sides in the principal industries concerned. At a Conference in Bradford I found myself congratulated satirically on having united the whole woollen trade as never before—in opposition to me and all my works. Other trades, like cotton and boot and shoe manufacture, followed suit. "The employers and workpeople engrossed in prosperity would not look beyond their noses."<sup>2</sup> The Act as passed had to be cut down by a later Act.

For a time in 1916 activity in the Board of Trade on reconstruction was combined for me with activity on Munitions. The launching of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 raised an intriguing problem of

<sup>1</sup> In *War and Insurance*, pp. 232-3 (Carnegie Economic and Social History of the World War, Oxford University Press, 1927).

<sup>2</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 232.

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publicity. We wanted to make our munition workers strain every nerve for higher output to save the country and their fellows in the trenches. We did not want to encourage the Germans by suggesting that we were short of shells. J. and I found what we thought a good solution of the problem, by asking the Prime Minister to tell the House of Commons that we had plenty of shells but that "the offensive is only beginning"; the phrase was born on a slip of blue paper passed to me by J. The Prime Minister used the words proposed for him and they filled the placards of the *Evening News*. J.'s phrase had hit the mark.

THURSDAY, JULY 13TH, 1916

OFFENSIVE

IS ONLY

BEGINNING

.... MR. ASQUITH

*Evening News*

WAR LATE EXTRA

The Battle of the Somme came home to me personally in another way. My brother-in-law Harry Tawney had enlisted in November 1914 in the Manchester Regiment. On July 6, 1916, came news that he had been wounded on the Somme, but nothing more; he was by that time a sergeant. I exploited my position as a high-up in Government service to get information by sending priority telegrams. When more news came it was not cheerful: hit in the open by a machine-gun, Harry had lain in the open two or three days; he came near enough to an end for my sister to be summoned to France. But his native strength was prodigious. By the end of August I could give my mother the best news of all. Harry "is really getting better and on the other hand it is extremely unlikely that he will ever be passed for foreign service again." He recovered to publish a notable pamphlet out of his military experience; to sit on the Coal Commission of 1919; and to give many years to learning, teaching and writing.

In the middle of September 1916 I took five days' holiday walking in the Lake District and returned to find the Ministry full of rumours of changes and reorganisation. I received the impression that, while I was away, some who should have known better had tried to make room for their promotion in the Ministry at my expense. One of the minor troubles of war was its disturbance of traditional loyalties in the Civil

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Service. But in any case my welcome in the Ministry of Munitions was coming to an end. If one may judge from a Press reference to me which I saw about this time, I had not during my stay at the Ministry improved my general reputation. "Mr. Beveridge," the paragraph stated, "has been a great success in some posts, but less so in others." On return from my holiday, in substance I went back whole-time to the Board of Trade and ceased to have more than a nominal place in Munitions. In mid-October I signalled this by taking up new quarters in Gwydyr House. That was really old quarters, for in Gwydyr House I had begun my Civil Service career. "Naturally," I assured my mother, "I shall now have a more gorgeous room. I am having to take up in a sort of way the question of Cost of Living as part of my new job. I know not if anything will come of it."

In the end more came of it than anyone imagined at the time. Cost of Living led to the Ministry of Food. At Gwydyr House I found myself occupied increasingly with Cost of Living and Trade Boards and extension of unemployment insurance. But the Board of Trade remained still the Department of Government for labour questions and I was in charge of its Employment Department. In that capacity I had my last shot but one at decasualisation of dock labour, and my last shot at industrial discipline for war.

Though the Munition Workers Insurance Act, through opposition of employers and workpeople, had failed of its purpose—or my purpose—of making a large extension of unemployment insurance, it did appear to offer a loophole for getting dock labour on to a new footing. It seemed to me vital to do this before the war ended. Many of the former dockers had gone off to military service or for work in munitions industries. With demobilisation of the forces and munition works they would come flooding back, and so would the unemployed of many other occupations, if the docks and wharves remained open to invasion. During the spring of 1916 I elaborated a scheme to prevent this.

I cannot now describe this scheme from documents. I kept the Board of Trade file of the scheme for many years after labour questions and I had left the Board, in the break-up of December 1916. Thereafter, in an access of conscience, I returned the file, and today it has become untraceable. It may be in the archives of the Board of Trade, or of the Ministry of Labour, or of the Ministry of National Insurance, or it may have been destroyed in World War II. But I remember the principle of my scheme well. It was to confine employment in the docks to registered men; to give men who had worked as dockers before the war a right to



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be registered; to give the employers the right of registering as many or as few other men as they pleased, but to compel them to pay a large entrance fee for each man registered; to guarantee a minimum income by insurance to the registered men and to make the employers liable for keeping the dockers' insurance fund solvent. If they registered more men than were really needed, they would pay not only the entrance fees but additional contributions to meet the cost of needless unemployment. They would have a strong financial motive to organise employment so as to make it as continuous as possible for every docker. I called this scheme the Dockers' Athenacum Club. The dockers were to become members of a privileged community, but future admission to it would not rest with those who were privileged already.

Having prepared the scheme to our satisfaction, Llewellyn Smith and I started consultations with the two sides of the industry in the summer of 1916 and found an encouraging reception. There was agreement all round that something must be done to prevent indiscriminate invasion of the docks by returning soldiers and others after the war.

The Board of Trade officials stood well with both sides in those days. After an encouraging talk with representatives of the Transport Workers' Federation at the beginning of August, I sent heads of our scheme to Robert Williams as Secretary to the Federation.<sup>1</sup> By November we had reached the point of getting heads of a Bill drafted by Parliamentary Counsel, to give effect to our scheme; it went beyond anything that could be done under existing Acts. But November 1916 was the last month of the Board of Trade as the department concerned with labour and unemployment insurance, and it was the last month of my official concern with such matters as a civil servant.

My final shot for industrial compulsion came in connection with the Man-Power Distribution Board which was set up late in August 1916 under the Chairmanship of Austen Chamberlain. I appeared before it, usually with Llewellyn Smith, on more than one occasion in September and October, proposing among other things the compulsory use of labour exchanges to control the distribution of man-power. As the sense of crisis deepened, the War Committee of the Cabinet on November 30, 1916, approved the introduction of compulsory national service for all men up to sixty and appointed a committee to work out details. As my contribution to this I wrote out the heads of a scheme for obtaining additional Man-Power from Unessential Trades by Compul-

<sup>1</sup> Robert Williams was later one of the victims of Ernest Bevin's rise to power, as described by Francis Williams in *Ernest Bevin*, p. 109 (Hutchinson, 1952).

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sory Industrial Service, though I am not sure if it ever got into any hands but mine; it proved to be my last contribution to labour problems as an official for just over twenty-four years. The War Committee's decision of November 30 was among its last acts, for on December 4 the first Coalition under Asquith fell and was succeeded by a new Government under Lloyd George, with Arthur Henderson in the War Cabinet. After learning from him how strong was the antagonism of organised labour to industrial conscription, the Government announced in December that they would proceed on voluntary lines; if voluntary effort failed to give the service required they would come to Parliament to ask formally for release from any pledges against industrial conscription. The retreat from the Manchester speech of June 1915 was final.

In the conditions of World War I it was probably a wise retreat. When, in the phoney stage of World War II, in a lecture at Oxford I reviewed my experiences of Economic Control in War Time, I concluded that, much as there is to be said in theory for industrial conscription in total war, for Britain "it is probable that the arguments against any form of industrial conscription in war outweigh the arguments in its favour." "Britons go farther led than driven: and if the ordinary British citizen does not feel injustice between the discipline of the military conscript and the uncharted liberties of the munition worker in war, there is no need for Prime Ministers or bureaucrats or University lecturers to feel it for him."

How the same problem looked when Phoney War gave place to The Other War in the middle of 1940 is one of the themes of a later chapter. For World War I, retreat from the Manchester speech of June 1915 was necessary. With this retreat went a retreat also from many of the provisions which under the instruction of that speech we had embodied in the first Munitions of War Act. Against change of Government policy we as officials could have no complaint. It only seemed to me hard at the time to be given the blame of the policy which was being abandoned as unpopular, and to be in the black books of its leading figure for most of the remainder of the war

## Chapter VII

### THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AFTER

The success of rationing is a supreme case of muddling through by brilliant improvisations made necessary by shifting policy and division of counsels.

*British Food Control*, p. 229.

#### 1. *Food Control when it was New*

THE new Government of December 1916 split the historic immense department of the Board of Trade. Three new Ministries, Labour, Food and Shipping, were carved out of it, and still left plenty of work behind—Commercial, Companies, Harbours, Railways, Bankruptcy and Labour Statistics, to say nothing of reconstruction after the war. Llewellyn Smith said to me soon after the split that he was busier than ever. For me, the split meant that all the work on which I had been engaged was now the concern either of the Ministry of Labour or of the Ministry of Food. But my official rank was that of Assistant Secretary in the Board of Trade.

I was busiest on the new task of Food Control, though till the middle of December I hoped to get back to Labour; I had been in charge of everything that fell to the new Labour Department and I would have liked to be its principal official. But the new Minister, John Hodge of the Steel Smelters, had other ideas. He wanted as his Permanent Secretary D. J. Shackleton, ex-M.P. and trade union leader and now a National Health Insurance Commissioner. I did not see Shackleton running a large department, and having gone to see Hodge I asked him if he would consider making me Joint Secretary with Shackleton. Hodge apparently took umbrage at that and a day or two later wrote to say that as I had made this suggestion, he did not feel able to offer me any post at all in the Ministry of Labour. I put things right by a letter which got a pleasant answer and made our parting friendly, but it was final.

I found myself by the middle of December cut off from the department which I had created, and I came to the Ministry of Food as Second Secretary with Sir Henry Rees (of the Board of Agriculture) as Permanent Secretary. I stayed with Food for nearly three years, till I left the Civil Service altogether in September 1919.

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I have described British Food Control at length in a volume of the Carnegie Economic and Social History of the First World War. I confine myself here to recording a few experiences relevant to my theme or illustrating the influence of personality and accident on events.

My first six months in the Ministry of Food were uncomfortable. The Food Controller of that day, Lord Devonport, whose reign I described later as that of "The Expert in Charge," soon made it plain that he had no use for me. But Henry Rew stood my friend throughout and saw that enough work came my way. "I hold on and do good by stealth," I said to my mother. I told her also how I was installed in the Duchess of Westminster's boudoir at Grosvenor House with my secretaries in the nursery next door.

January 14, 1917.

The Duke's housekeeper has stayed behind and tells us tales of grandeur.

Fifty servants for five of family.

The Duke's steward had a special footman in livery to wait on him and the footman was served by a housemaid. The kitchens are palatial. The servants' bedrooms disgraceful. Tiny little attics. Now full of shorthand typists.

I've been saying to myself—and I think it's true—that for the moment not only the last Government but the whole Civil Service is out of office, and much of the subordinate government of the country is in the hands of amateurs. But no doubt the Civil Service will come back again, and meanwhile it's well for other forms of ability to be tried.

At the time of this letter, in January, I was wont to say that I didn't see how Lord Devonport could last three months as Food Controller.

When after six months Lord Devonport was replaced by Lord Rhondda my prophecy of the Civil Service coming back again was fulfilled for the Ministry of Food. Rhondda had a great belief in civil servants. Fortunately for myself the civil servant in whom he trusted most and chose as his Permanent Secretary was a former colleague of mine in the Board of Trade, Ulick Wintour, who had made a great success of the Army Contracts Branch. Wintour's coming meant the departure of Henry Rew. From things that Rhondda said to me at our first meeting I realised that he was wondering whether he should not part with me as well.

Wintour said to me that, having regard to my record in the Board

## FOOD MINISTRY, AND AFTER

of Trade, he could not understand what had gone wrong for me in Food. I tried to explain. With Wintour's friendly support, I stayed on as Second Secretary and soon found myself swamped in interesting and important work. But the problem of rationing which had excited me for six months continued to elude me. Till the London food queues had actually been destroyed in March 1918 by the local rationing scheme extemporised by Stephen Tallents and myself, rationing in the Ministry belonged officially not to Tallents and me but to S. P. Vivian, brought in six months before from the Insurance Commission. The story of the queues and their destruction and of the national rationing that followed has been told already and need not be repeated. But it may be well to complete the quotation standing at the head of this chapter:

It is a sober statement of fact that the Ministry of Food made its own and much of Lord Rhondda's reputation by putting accidentally into practice one system of rationing while it was formally engaged in devising a different system. It was little more than a further accident that saved Lord Rhondda from being driven by the Prime Minister to supersede at the last moment the officials who were organising his imminent victory over the queues, and to install in February 1918 a brand-new Director-General of Rationing who at worst would have postponed or confused the scheme and at best would have let it run and gained its laurels.

The practical and satisfactory conclusion was that Rhondda became established in popular favour and I was established with him. From the London and Home Counties scheme for meat and fats in February we went on to a scheme for the whole country on the same lines in April. I was gratified when a purist in language wrote from Hampton Court Palace to give enthusiastic congratulations on the wording of the instructions. He described them as quite remarkable among official documents in being set out in clear, short and straightforward sentences and Anglo-Saxon words to the avoidance of "latinese" like "commencing."

But in April Rhondda fell ill. He never returned to work and he died early in July. Under his successor, J. R. Clynnes, the Ministry ran into a severe internal crisis, which led to the departure of Rhondda's right-hand man Ulick Wintour, his replacement by Sir John Beale of the Wheat Commission and the resignation in protest of two or three of Wintour's chief assistants. To the formal record of this crisis, as given in *British Food Control*, may now be added a personal experience which has more than personal significance.

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The crisis was in substance a trial of strength between Wintour and Beale, with victory going to the latter because he had secured the ear and support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Bonar Law. Beale could not have won in Rhondda's lifetime. But for one reason or another Clynes never felt comfortable with Wintour; he was happier with me and he knew that I was on good terms with Beale. At his request I spent days on peace-making, trying to devise working arrangements to keep both Wintour and Beale. When these were rejected by Beale (I had persuaded everyone else, including the Earl of Crawford as Chairman of the Wheat Commission), and Wintour's going became certain, Clynes proposed to appoint me Permanent Secretary in Wintour's place. He was told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he could not decide this for himself. The Ministry of Food, with its international scope, was now so important that the choice of its principal official concerned the Government as a whole. In succession to Wintour he must appoint Beale as Permanent Secretary. Clynes accepted the instruction. He had to content himself with writing to the Chancellor to say that he did so with the greatest reluctance and to ask for more salary for me.

The constitutional interest of the affair is that it represented the first practical assertion of the present rule that appointments of the chief officials in every department require the consent of the Prime Minister advised by the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. Proclamation of the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury as "permanent Head of the Civil Service" was made in September 1919; he was to "advise the First Lord (i.e. the Prime Minister) in regard to Civil Service appointments and decorations." The list of appointments to which the consent of the Prime Minister, so advised, should be required followed six months later in a Treasury Circular of March 1920. The list includes "Permanent Heads of Departments, their Deputies, Principal Financial Officers and Principal Establishment Officers."

When I entered the Civil Service no such central control had been established. There was a story current in those days of John Burns as President of the Local Government Board. His Permanent Secretary, Sir Samuel Provis, was past the age of voluntary retirement, though with two or three years to go for compulsory retirement. He indicated to Burns his desire to retire at once. "All right," said Burns, "then I can appoint Mr. X to succeed you." (Mr. X was the President's Private Secretary and as such a junior.) "If you're going to do that," said Provis, "I won't retire till I must, and by then you may no longer be President." So a compromise was arranged: the most suitable Assistant Secretary

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was to become Permanent Secretary and Mr. X was to be promoted to fill his place; on these conditions Samuel Provis resigned forthwith. I cannot vouch for the truth of this story, but it went on good authority. It illustrates the need for some check on the choices made by transient Ministers, but the far-reaching control of appointments now claimed for the Treasury, extending well beyond the Permanent Secretary of each department, has dangers of its own. Where, as may happen and has happened—the head of the Treasury is a creature liking to exercise power over others the effect on the Civil Service can be unfortunate.

As in the Ministry of Munitions, so in the Ministry of Food, carrying on the war was combined nearly always with planning for what should happen in peace.

Late in 1917, I had been made Chairman of a Sub-Committee of the Civil War Workers' Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction to report on unemployment insurance. The report of this Sub-Committee drafted by myself came up for settlement and signature on February 12, 1918, the moment when I was busiest with Tallents preparing the London rationing scheme. The Report proposed a general scheme of insurance for all industries adapted to the special conditions in each industry. In the last week of February 1918, as I wrote to my mother, I had an interesting talk about the scheme with George Roberts,\* who was then the Minister of Labour. "The Committee of which I'm Chairman have just finished their report—advocating general insurance—and I want him to take it up. He was quite sympathetic. So now I'm going to try him with my Dock Labour scheme."

I was looking always for back doors to come once more to my first loves of unemployment and decasualisation. During the comparative calm which followed on success of rationing before the September crisis of the Ministry, I tried again to get a move on with unemployment insurance, this time through D. J. Shackleton, the Permanent Secretary of Labour. But nothing happened then on insurance.

With decasualisation of dock labour I had more success. I sent my decasualisation scheme of November 1916 to George Roberts in the last week of February 1918, and just before the Armistice I returned to the charge.<sup>1</sup> I found both Roberts and his Permanent Secretary sympathetic and friendly. Shackleton suggested that I should become Chairman of a Committee to consider schemes of decasualisation. I told him that, though I was anxious to give every help I could, I might not be regarded as a suitable Chairman, for I had proposed already a specific scheme. In

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 6.

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February 1919 a Committee on Dock Labour with Mr. Justice Roche as Chairman was appointed.

There was even in 1918 a lighter side of life. There were occasional holidays, usually for me a few days spent in walking over hills. There was a cheerful moment in March 1918 when I was able to tell my mother that J.'s and my naval game "Swish" had sold 1,200 copies and produced £8. 10s. in royalties. But the producer seemed to think that was enough for us. By May I had to report that this work was out of print.

There was a week of air-raids in September and October 1917, which at least gave one something else to think and write about than work.

October 1, 1917.

I'm just sitting through our nightly bombardment which has lasted longer than usual, though less continuous than usual. It seemed to have finished but has just begun again—as a sequel to a rather loud explosion which *may* have been a bomb three miles away.

This nightly business is a nuisance as the office empties about six and travelling back by tube becomes asphyxiating. Even at 6.30 today I found people ensconced at Notting Hill Gate station (I think the free list has been suspended and that they had paid for tickets as passengers). . . .

P.S. The London streets on Sunday were a quaint sight—full of children with hammers or without them, digging shrapnel out of the roadway.

But air-raids generally made no difference to most people in World War I. Of a daylight raid on London in June 1917 I wrote to my mother that I had neither seen nor heard anything of it; I had been engaged on settling answers to questions with the Parliamentary Secretary. I kept and sent to her also as light relief from war the following extract that came my way:

### Extract from the SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT of the STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTIST SOCIETY

Year ended March 31, 1916

*Damage by Air Raid.* The Committee is sorry to record that the chapel at Hertford was badly damaged by Air Raid last autumn. It has, however, been repaired, and a goodly sum towards the cost has been already subscribed, and it is hoped that, through the goodness of the Lord, the Cause will soon be out of debt. Whilst the Com-



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mittee trusts that the Lord will not permit any other chapel to be damaged, it advises Trustees to have their chapels insured against damage by aircraft as well as against fire. The premium is small.

There was time for reading things entirely remote from war. I myself took largely to Latin and Greek, particularly those authors who had been no part of my course at Oxford—Apuleius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Pliny's Letters. These last I described to my mother as the exact counterpart of the minutes and correspondence which make up so much of the work of Government departments. "Some day I'll write an essay on the Civil Service in all ages."

There were parties now and again. From one cheerful evening I returned richer for the following copy of a letter, to which Pliny has no parallel.

TREASURY CHAMBERS,  
May 8, 1918.

Sir,

I have laid before the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury Mr. Cubitt's letter of the 25th ultimo (53/London/618 Q.M.G.F.) proposing that officers in the War Office may have the use of any existing facilities for the issue of rations in kind and may draw them free of cost according to the authorised scale, on the ground that the civilian rations are insufficient to maintain their military efficiency.

In reply, I am to state that, in the absence of any scientific evidence that inefficiency of military staff at the War Office results from the reduction of the meat rations, My Lords feel unable to adopt this proposal.

I am to point out that the civilian ration is found sufficient for persons (including the Admiralty Staff) engaged on sedentary work often of a very exacting kind.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant.

(Sgd) ROBERT CHALMERS

The Secretary,  
War Office.

The middle paragraph is the Treasury at its unkindest best. I have always suspected that in the first draft "the" appeared before "inefficiency" in the second paragraph.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR I

At last came the lightening of all our lives, with the sands of war running out and reconstruction beginning to take first place.

October 20, 1918.

I went to a Reconstruction meeting the other day (quite dull—about imports during an armistice) and met J. S. Nicholson of the Employment Exchanges again, and got him to dinner and had much gossip. Things aren't very happy in the Ministry of Labour. . . . And of course the Ministry of Labour is entirely un-ready with schemes for unemployment. Nicholson of course said he prayed continually for my return, but it's not very likely with the present regime there. And though of course I'd have to go and do Labour if I got a fair chance, I'd feel much more interested in something inter-allied and international. However meanwhile no question arises and I go on with my potatoes.

And the Army goes on with the war. I think Wilson, though he has done in the Germans rather badly, has lost prestige, by the contrast of his two notes. And I fear the apparent failure to crush the German armies altogether may harden them to fight to the death on the Meuse. The London talk of course is of the relative failure of the Americans north of Verdun having upset Foch's plans to surround the Germans.

Meanwhile the drama of empty Lille and empty Ostend—empty that is of Germans—is finer than all fiction. Tomorrow perhaps we shall hear of Ghent coming back too. August to September 1913 was your and my time there.

### *2. From Armistice to Peace Treaty*

Of the Armistice of November 11, 1918, I need say nothing here. I have written elsewhere of its spontaneous delirium, as contrasted with the calculated celebrations of the Peace Treaty in the following July.

The end of fighting and the General Election which followed brought changes in the higher direction of the Ministry of Food. J. R. Clynes stuck to Labour and resigned his office; he was succeeded by another Labour man, George Roberts, ready to work with the Coalition. John Beale and Alan Anderson, like many other business men, went back to their businesses almost at once. In due course, I succeeded as Permanent Secretary. But before this happened I had made two expeditions abroad

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to see sides of war hitherto unknown to me—to the battlefields of Flanders and to Central Europe in disintegration.

The Ministry of Food had been given the job of organising the Hotel Majestic in Paris as headquarters of the British Delegation to the coming Peace Conference. Ten days after the Armistice a party from the Ministry crossed to Boulogne to begin on this job; Uthwatt and I went with them and from Boulogne diverged to a two-day tour of battlefields, made possible for us by our friendship with the then Secretary of War, Ian Macpherson. With his authority we had freedom to go more or less where we willed, with a car and a conducting captain. G.H.Q. had given us a programme of going to Ypres–Lille and back to the "Visitors' Château." "Our actual journey," as I wrote to my mother in giving a full account after, "was not exactly according to programme!"

Nor was it all what we might have willed freely. Our first day brought us through flattened Hazebrouck, Bailleul and Ypres, and after many adventures among shell-holes to empty but standing Armentières and late at night to almost undamaged Lille. There, not at the Visitors' Château, we spent the night. G.H.Q. with Macpherson's introduction had treated us with great solicitude as honoured guests. But:

there was perhaps a certain amiable vagueness about G.H.Q. in that it had sent us out on a clearly impossible tour (for length) with instructions to return for the night to a "Visitors' Château" of which neither our driver nor our appointed conductor nor anyone at all at Boulogne knew the address.

Our adventures had included running out of petrol in the dark miles from anywhere and retuelling from a chance sergeant with a motor lorry. They had included crossing the invisible line which separated the British from the German trenches and realising from the warning notices and instructions, identical but for language, that war had meant the same thing in practice on each side of the line. "Put on gas masks here." "Beware unexploded shell," etc., etc. They had not included seeing anything but desolation:

From the time we left Hazebrouck (about 1.30) till we reached Lille (about 10 p.m.) we did not in all that time of constant motoring see a human being not connected with the Army (save a car load of sightseers) or any animal (except a cat at Le Bizet and a water rat in the Hollebecke morass) or really any living thing except rank grass, or any inhabited house.

Ypres itself is a ruin already becoming venerable. The colours of

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the bricks and stone are mellowed; grass and moss are beginning to grow over the ruins; it has already something of the air of Tintern Abbey. The only active thing there is the railway—running through to the front.

Lille itself was practically undamaged. The next day we spent mainly near La Bassée and Vermelles and on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, attacked disastrously in the Loos offensive of September 1915. Our guide, Captain Ogden, had been in this attack:

He identified a hollow in the ground as probably the site of the part of the Hohenzollern Redoubt "Big Willie" which we had captured and held for a while, while the Germans still held a trench leading straight from it, "Little Willie." From this having the range exactly they showered grenades and bombs into "Big Willie" upon the British who were helpless to get at them. One party after another was sent up to hold "Big Willie" and came back with one quarter of its strength. Captain Ogden himself was in charge of one of those parties and held on while his men all round were blown to bits and the place became a shambles. Finally his own jaw was shot away and he was carried back to Vermelles.

And all this was for no gain. At Loos altogether (this was part of that attack) we lost 70,000 in casualties and had to retire at last from all the ground we won in the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The Germans settled down again for three long years.

The place is and looks like a murderer—haunted and really horrible beyond words.

On the way up to the Redoubt, I picked up a book outside one of our dug-outs: *Caliban's Guide to Letters* by Hilaire Belloc with the owner's name and date inside: "A. G. Ansell, May 1915." I brought it away and tried to return it to its owner, and probably succeeded, though I have no record to show this now.

We ended the day luxuriously at the Visitors' Château near Tramecour with English papers and bridge. We had planned another day of sightseeing, but news of Clynes's resignation and potato queues and Herbert Hoover's arrival in London hurried us home:

And oh the joy of seeing at Boulogne the stolid victorious British Army returning from leave to go to the front—with the knowledge that none of them were going to be killed any more.

So my sightseeing tale to my mother ends.

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Hoover's visit to London led to another expedition overseas for me. Five days before Christmas I was asked to proceed to Berne as British member of an Inter-Allied Mission on Relief of German Austria. So I was given the chance of seeing another side of total war—Central Europe in disintegration. I kept a full diary of our mission—from December 20, 1918, to January 15 following. The quotations below are from this diary.

Most of the Mission—four or five Americans, two Frenchmen and myself—assembled in Paris on Sunday December 22, and left that night for Switzerland by Pontarlier; the Italians joined us at Berne. At Pontarlier we had to change trains and wait several hours, but delay proved well worth while. I bought here a picture postcard of war prepared for the troops, showing a ruined tractor on the roadside, with French title and English translation below. "*Une locomotive abandonnée devant Thiepvál.*" "One locomotive a profligate woman forepart Thiepvál."

Our first meeting with "the enemy," on Christmas Eve at Berne in a large room at the American Legation, was "an odd business in which we partly bowed and partly shook hands." There were twelve of the Allies (5 American, 2 French, 3 Italians and 2 British, I being reinforced from our Embassy). There were six Austrians: Baron von Hennes as leader, Schwarz Hiller representing the Oberbürgermeister of Vienna, four financial and commercial experts. Schwarz Hiller I described in my diary as "in some ways the most moving of the lot—obviously sincere, sentimental, youngish, filled with the tragedy of his lost city for which he pleads explosively."

Adler, the chief financial expert, is a pinched, weary-eyed creature. Hennes a man of the world, facile and well-mannered. The others are mostly silent. Altogether as sad men as ever I have seen. They are in the Bellevue Palace and pass me often on the way to dinner. I am ashamed before them as I used to be at going to interview beggars at the door at Toynbee. For beggars they are—sans food, sans money, sans country, sans everything.

At the first meeting Schwarz Hiller broke in on a discussion of finance with an entreaty to us to come to Vienna. But we got back at once to finance, all that afternoon and all next Christmas morning. I had received no real instructions in London: only an indication from Lord Reading at the Foreign Office that relief of German Austria was decided on in principle and that blockade and finance technicalities should not

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stand in the way. But this was not, at first at least, the view of my colleagues:

The Americans pressed the view that they could not help except for dollars down and neither could we. The Italians raised objection to taking Austrian securities for food, since these might be required for indemnities. The Americans said it was impossible to go to Vienna.

Altogether the day was one of *impasse* and dejection. I had a solitary Christmas dinner and went up to my room immediately after to work on rules of procedure and on a financial memo (setting out the theory of German Austria as a bankrupt).

Next day I got my rules of procedure adopted. They dealt among other things with the problem of languages. Whether we spoke English, French or German one or other of the delegates could not understand. My rules provided for either English or French being used in our discussion. Giuffrida asked us for form's sake to add Italian, while agreeing that we would never speak it. He was a jovial capable Sicilian and he and I became special friends; I saw the New Year in with him at Buchs on the Swiss-Austrian border. I wonder often now what happened to him when Mussolini came; I never managed to discover.

Next day also from Berne I sent memoranda to the Ministry of Food recommending:

- (i) The setting up of a financial commission to treat Austria on the basis of being bankrupt; (ii) the advance without finance of 30,000 tons flour and 5,000 tons fat; (iii) an immediate visit to Vienna.

There followed three days of confused argument, with the Americans holding out for business terms. At last we got agreement between ourselves and with the Austrians on some sort of mortgage to cover an immediate supply of 4,000 tons of food. We agreed also on going to Vienna; we were to start on the last day of the year.

The morning before, at the British Legation, I was handed a telegram from the Ministry of Food in London to say that bacon supplies would be available at the New Year. The Legation officials, including the Minister, Sir Horace Rumbold, were much cheered. So was I. But at luncheon I admitted to Rumbold with apologies that the telegram did not mean what he thought. I had known before leaving London that Clynes had repeated and pressed his request for a K.C.B. for me, and that the

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answer, if favourable, would come while I was away. So I arranged with J. to send me a telegram in bacon code.

Next day, the last day of 1918, we set out on our travels. Our journey from Berne to Vienna took fifty-two hours in spite of the effort of the Vienna authorities, by sending to Innsbruck a special engine with part of their exiguous store of coal, to bring our carriage on rapidly and alone. But at the starting-point and at each considerable station at which we stopped were carriages loaded with people who had been waiting for days for an engine; each station-master seized the chance of attaching to us as many carriages as he dared. So at each remove we dragged a lengthening chain and arrived at last of interminable length. This was our first illustration of the breakdown of transport.

In Vienna the Food Controller expounded to us his rationing system, his insufficient rations for months past, and the imminent prospect of not being able to supply even these rations. As a fellow-expert I described the Vienna rationing system in my diary as absolutely water-tight and admirable, "except that very little food is distributed under it, but much goes down the contraband road." We paid an early morning visit to the meat market. There was a small quantity of unpleasant meat dangling about and a fair number of people buying. But many stalls and the cool chambers below, that in peace had always been full to overflowing, were altogether empty:

By the time we got back to the public part of the market our identity was becoming known and the women customers came twittering round us like ghosts in Hades, saying that they wanted food. There was nothing hostile in their action but they were protesting against having nothing to eat. We were gradually shepherded out and taken off to a vegetable market. Here we found plenty of unappetising vegetables and very few buyers. There were also plenty of apples. The customers protested against having to live entirely on animal fodder.

We then went to another mixed market in a poor district, where there was rather more of a demonstration and a crowd gathered round our car and was harangued with waving arms by one of our guides who explained that help would surely come. The children whom I saw here were certainly very thin and colourless. Finally we were taken to see the East Station with its absolutely empty warehouses.

The Director of the meat market was the only fat man I saw in Vienna.

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After the markets and the queues we were thankful for occasional light relief:

In the course of the morning I saw a British military expedition setting off to Hungary to rescue a castle in distress. One of the Esterhazy counts had complained to Bethell that his castle was being attacked by a Czech army and that the lives of the British subjects therein (horse trainers, servants, etc.) were in danger. So a rescue expedition was sent. It consisted of one motor-car carrying Lieutenant Parker, a sergeant, and a military policeman. I believe that on arrival they found the British subjects perfectly safe and not in need of rescue. At any rate the expedition did not have any actual fighting.

We went to talk to doctors and were given horrifying figures about the weights of children—up to the normal weight at birth but losing ground continually with each year of age through malnutrition; the almost complete disappearance of any milk supply was a particularly disastrous feature. Want at the other end of life was illustrated to us from an almshouse for the aged poor; to all intents and purposes the inmates had been reduced to a diet of sauerkraut. The Mission decided at once that Vienna was in urgent need of relief:

There can be no question that the Viennese population has been slowly starved for many months past. The new element in the position is that the authorities found themselves threatened with the early prospect of being unable to maintain even the former inadequate rations. They had depended for a considerable proportion of their supplies upon Bohemia and Hungary. With the break-up of the empire these sources of supply were cut off, while uncertainty as to the future drove the producers in German Austria itself to hoard their stocks as much as possible. It is easy to understand how within a very few months of the new harvest Vienna should be in imminent risk of complete exhaustion of supplies, involving literal starvation.

From Vienna we made excursions of two days each to Prag and to Buda Pest, travelling always by night and arriving in the dark just before sunrise. The original object of these excursions had been to explore the possibility of obtaining the necessary relief for German Austria by drawing on supplies from these neighbouring countries. The result of this exploration was negative. In Czecho-Slovakia and in Hungary alike we were



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met by a demand for more cereals and fats, to stave off exhaustion of stocks. But in neither of these countries did food shortage occupy the centre of the stage, as it did in Vienna.

At Prag as a Food Mission we began by discussing food, in a conference recorded in my diary as follows:

We had a long and confused discussion on food and coal, partly at the Ratchani (where the anarchist Food Controller (Verbenski) made us a long and impassioned oration in Czech, condensed by the interpreter into exactly three English sentences) and partly at the Food Ministry, where several officials at once made us impassioned speeches in extremely rapid and unintelligible German. In the middle we had a talk with Kramarsch.

But when Kramarsch got us to himself later he was concerned about other things than food; he spoke at length on fear of Bolshevism and begged for Allied troops. The day after we left, Kramarsch was shot at but was saved by a pocket-book in which the bullet lodged.

At Buda Pest we heard even less about food than we had heard in Prag. We found Karolyi in charge or at least Prime Minister of a Coalition. We were taken to the Palace where he was holding a Cabinet meeting, from which he and others came out at intervals to address us. We gathered that there was not only a meeting but a crisis, through demands of one party or another to have more portfolios:

Karolyi was an obviously weary and feverish man. He stated that he (having always opposed the war) had been put at the head of the Provisional Government after the Revolution, in the expectation that he would readily get into touch with the Entente. For two months he had been vainly trying to get speech with any representative of the Entente. This failure was weakening his position in Hungary, where he was attacked on all sides—by the Social Democrats asking for more offices and leaning to Bolshevism, and by the Conservatives disliking his radical tendencies and insisting on the territorial integrity of Hungary. It was utterly unjust to determine the fate of Hungarian territories at a "Peace Conference" from which one side was altogether excluded. He begged us to see and get the view of men of all parties, his opponents no less than his supporters. The present position was intolerable and hopeless; "if this is peace, give me war." All his speech was on politics, not a word about food.

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One of the French delegates, Haguenin, was put up to give our formal answer to this appeal:

Haguenin's reply was to the effect that we were authorised to deal only with food; that at present there was only an armistice, during which formal diplomatic negotiations could not take place; that whatever Hungary was suffering now Belgium and Northern France had suffered worse; that at any rate the sending of the Mission was sufficient evidence of the fair intentions of the Allies.

Karolyi found it difficult to understand the statement that the war was not yet ended, except as a piece of pedantry. Hungary had disbanded her Army and clearly could not fight again. I found myself explaining to him and others as tactfully as possible that I did not think that the Entente had any particular dislike for Hungary or any deliberate intention to harm in leaving them so long unnoticed; the Entente Governments had many more important things to think about than the fate of 10,000,000 people in Hungary, and Hungary must wait her turn for political attention. Meanwhile our sole business was food.

In the evening we celebrated my K.C.B. in the room in which Karolyi had announced the revolution. We had to be there because alcohol cannot be sold in any public rooms in Buda Pest. It can, however, apparently be obtained in satisfactory quantities on special occasions.

While the Ministers talked nothing but politics to us we did get down our business with the officials:

In respect of supplying statistics, maps, memoranda, etc. the Hungarian officials were far ahead of both the Viennese and the Prag ones (the latter of whom are of course in some cases quite new to their work and have to organise Government departments from the beginning). They certainly gave a most depressing account of the general economic situation. Through want of coal they are reduced to running one train a day on main lines; one train every third day on branch lines; and no trains at all in the Dobrudja. In many parts of the country the potato crops cannot be lifted because the peasants have no boots or clothes fit for outdoor work. Though there is enough corn to carry on to the end of April, there is no fat.

Our proceedings were interrupted continuously by Karolyi, who wished to talk politics and walked back with us to our hotel. On the

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way I saw the "Nem Nem Soha" poster as to the integrity of Hungary and asked for samples which I subsequently brought away.

One of my interlocutors was Count Esterhazy, who had been Prime Minister:

Count Esterhazy told me that the Hungarians had expected England to have a Government of Labour and feminist sympathies and had accordingly chosen a woman of that type—Madame Schwinmer—to represent them in Berne, in the hope that she would more readily get a hearing. Now they have withdrawn her and were trying a Baron—Silberschied—instead.

The last conversation I had with a Hungarian was with Forster (of the Hungarian Foreign Office) who took me aside on the Vienna Station to ask if I thought the Entente would look more favourably on Hungary if she went in for reaction and set up a Conservative or even a monarchical Government. I said that I knew absolutely nothing of the mind of the Entente statesmen on such matters. As an ordinary Britisher I should doubt if we cared what form of Government Hungary had so long as it was in a position to govern. The way in which the Hungarians are turning now one way now the other in the hope of finding a means of approach to the Entente is most striking.

Baron Podmanicky took me aside to say that he was leaving for Christiania—in the hope of meeting there an Englishman to whom he could talk. I could hold out no certainty of his finding any Englishman there.

In Prag the Czechs had mostly, with apologies, talked to us in German. In Buda Pest nearly everyone talked English to us. There had been a long connection—on the hunting and horse-breeding side particularly—between the upper ranks of society there and in England. I was shown in the principal club a portrait of King Edward VII presented by himself, which had been kept fully displayed throughout the war.

Karolyi himself hung about us till the last moment. We learned that during his final hour with us there had been a meeting of Bolsheviks (under the supervision of machine-guns) who had passed resolutions demanding his supersession. A month later he and his Coalition were superseded by the Bolsheviks under Bela Kun, though this too did not last for long.

From Buda Pest we got back to Vienna at what had now become our

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regular time of arrival, 6.30 a.m. We had arranged already, between our Prag and Buda excursions, for the setting up of permanent sub-committees to organise relief, though the financial problems remained unsettled. After one last day in Vienna we left for home, or at least for Paris where the temporary rulers of the world were assembled, to do what we could about food problems and about the more general trouble of which deficiency of food was a symptom only.

Our return journey in Austria was made more comfortable than our journey out because by now our character as potential Providence had been recognised; we were given a saloon carriage which had been built for the Emperor. The rest of our journey was made shorter in time than it would have been otherwise, by our being driven in an American Army car across Switzerland from the north-eastern corner to the south-western corner to catch a night train to Paris from Geneva:

... We arrived finally in Paris about 2 p.m. on Wednesday, January 15. Our motor drive across Switzerland saved a whole day between Vienna and Paris, reducing the journey from four and a half to three and a half days.

So the diary ends. In addition to the diary and to many interim reports and memoranda I produced a formal Report, running counter to all that was being proposed in Paris about the Austrian Peace Treaty. I contrived also before leaving Paris for London to have a short talk with the Prime Minister at the Hotel Majestic, in hope of impressing on him the economic and political breakdown that we had seen in Central Europe. Harold Nicolson, in his diary of the Peace Conference, records the apprehension with which he and his Foreign Office colleagues viewed my activities and above all the prospect of my talking sentimental unwisdom to the Prime Minister. Their alarm was needless. I had my interview late one night with a Prime Minister whose mind was engaged on larger problems than the fate of German Austria.

The Report on my mission was buried in the archives of the Foreign Office. The Peace Conference proceeded to the absurdity of repeating for German Austria indemnity and reparation clauses copied from the treaty for Germany.

With the permission of the Government of today I print now in the Appendix extracts from the Summary and Recommendations of this buried Report to show how Central Europe looked then to one observer.<sup>1</sup>

As I wrote to my mother on the return journey "in the train

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 7.

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approaching Salzburg, January 12, 1919," the Inter-Allied Mission had been a truly amazing experience, of "seeing half a continent in a ferment of disintegration and relapse to a doubtful struggle for the bare necessities of life."

I am afraid I have acquired a very violent distaste for coming back to ordinary departmental work and a passion for playing providence about Europe. But I've no idea how this international work will develop, whether there'll be any job there for me, and whether in any case I could reasonably ask to be released from the Ministry of Food.

My fate was settled for me. No one with power to appoint me as Providence in Europe or any part of it wished to make any such appointment. On the other hand, the new Food Controller, George Roberts, did want me to come to London as Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Food. So on January 25, 1919, I went back to London, though hardly with ordinary departmental work in mind.

To me, it seemed clear, as I wrote ten years later,<sup>1</sup> that there was no room or need for a Ministry of Food in peace-time. The task to which I was returning was one of demobilisation, as smooth as it could be made and, subject to that, as rapid as it could be made. What I should do for a living when the Ministry came to an end was not so clear. The doubt was resolved during May by an invitation from Sidney Webb to talk to him. The London School of Economics and Political Science was on the threshold of great developments and would be looking for a full-time Director. I went to see Webb in the House of Lords, where he was sitting as a member of the Royal Commission on Coal Mines under the Chairmanship of Lord Sankey. My next move was settled in effect by a letter to him which I wrote early in June from Edinburgh, where I had gone to deal with a problem of potatoes. I agreed on practically agreed terms to be recommended for appointment to the Court of Management, and the Court of Governors on July 2 made the appointment, to begin from October 1.

Officially I was still an Assistant Secretary of the Board of Trade with ten years of pensionable service to my credit. Before writing to Webb in June, I thought it proper to see the President of the Board of Trade—then Auckland Geddes—to see if the Board would regret my leaving. It became clear that they would not do so. Auckland Geddes spoke of the need to put a new heart into the large body of the Board of Trade—

<sup>1</sup> In *British Food Control*; see particularly pp. 342-4.

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Llewellyn Smith was already being translated into Economic Adviser to the Government in general. But he could not advise me against accepting the School of Economics offer.

I had not expected anything else from Auckland Geddes. My connection with the Board of Trade was through Labour, and Labour had gone from the Board. So I left the Civil Service. I wrote to Lloyd George as Prime Minister to say good-bye and was pleased to get a friendly letter back from him, speaking highly of my services in the war; the Ministry of Food appeared to have cleaned for him my record from Munitions. I wrote also to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to see if I could get anything for my accrued pension rights from ten years of service. The Treasury answer became one of my greatest treasures; since I was less than sixty years old, they could do nothing for me without evidence that I had become either physically or mentally incapable. Wishing to leave the Civil Service before one must was not accepted by the Treasury as being in itself evidence of a mind unhinged.

### 3. *Lloyd George and Rhondda*

My two chief masters in World War I were Lloyd George for Munitions and Rhondda for Food. Each of these two came from the small country of Wales. Each of them accomplished great things. But there resemblance between them ends. In character and methods of work, above all in the handling of other men, they were poles apart. In a book whose main theme is examination of how things get done—or do not get done—it is natural to end this chapter on World War I by brief comment on these two figures in it. In making this comment, I must make clear also the limited period of my personal contact with each of these men. Rhondda I knew only in the last year of his life. I spoke to him at any length for the first time in June 1917, just before he came to the Ministry of Food. In the following June he died. Lloyd George I had known in the days of the National Insurance Bill of 1911. But, after he left the Ministry of Munitions in June 1916, I saw him in action as a Minister only a few times: once or twice at a War Cabinet meeting on food, twice at the Peace Conference in Paris. I saw little of him as a public man either in the days of his greatest power or thereafter in the decline of his power.

Lloyd George was incomparably the greatest figure of the war and the chief single contributor to its result. He was that, because sooner than any other man of importance on the Franco-British side he grasped the

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nature of the new plague that was coming upon the world, total war in place of partial war, a struggle of peoples rather than of armies and navies. In one of his discussions with trade unions during the war he used a phrase which he alone could have invented then: "You cannot haggle with an earthquake." He felt an earthquake where most of his fellows thought only of another war.

It was fortunate for Britain and the world that the statesman who saw this was a creature of dynamic force untrammelled by respect for authority. No one other than Lloyd George could have broken so quickly through the embattled defences of the War Office, entrenched under the flag of a popular soldier.

Creation of the Ministry of Munitions in the first year of war was Lloyd George's decisive contribution to final victory—a product of vision and passion. No doubt all the other leaders of Britain in those years desired victory. But I remember a remark made to me, I think early in 1916, by Llewellyn Smith, that Lloyd George wanted to win the war with a passion which none of his colleagues in the Cabinet seemed even to understand.

To vision and passion Lloyd George added a more than feminine sensitiveness to social atmosphere. I have given an illustration of this in an earlier chapter, in his handling of deputations of Friendly Societies on national insurance. In the war I recall the same experience at the dinner of farewell to him in June 1916, when he was leaving the Ministry of Munitions for the War Office. All the chiefs of the Ministry were there. As I looked round at them, I said to myself that there could be few of them who, at one moment or another, had not said to themselves that they would walk out because they could not stand the Minister any longer. At the dinner he sensed this. He said that he realised how unpleasant he had often been—a gad-fly to us all. But he himself had been stung and driven by the thought of what was needed to save our men in France and Flanders. He begged us to forgive him. At the end of his speech, all of us felt that we would go through fire and water for him, and with him.

Lloyd George's invention of the Ministry of Munitions and the drive that he gave to its productive and business side are achievements not open to question. Whether he was equally happy in his treatment of labour is a different issue. I and others with me did not feel at the time that he was right there. He talked largely of industrial discipline but he ran away from it in practice when trouble threatened. I recall a meeting on the Munitions Bill with the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, about

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June 1915, which owing to unexpected absence of the Minister had to be taken by Llewellyn Smith. At the end of it, the latter remarked to me: "This is the first time that the A.S.E. have not obtained any harmful concession."

I put the case for myself to my mother, with a suitable apology at the end, in a letter of February 1, 1917, just after I had been cut off from Labour:

. . . It was reported to me that the reason why Mr. Hodge could not have me was that the trade unions feared me as a personal force that during the war would be against them! Complimentary if not really true. But some at least of the trade union leaders would like to have me back.

What I have always said to them was that I stood for the impartial State. In peace-time the employers were generally top dog, and so my business was chiefly to prevent the employer from exploiting his advantage unduly. In war-time the workman is top dog, and therefore my business (for the state) is to prevent the workman from exploiting his advantage unduly.

Forgive all this rather bombastic talk!

As to whether Lloyd George was right in his temporising and concessions, or we officials were right in wanting a firmer line, I do not feel certain now. Today a new light has been thrown on this issue by the coming of totalitarian rule in Eastern Europe.

On the face of things, it is unjust, in a total war, that for those who work in the factories there should not be discipline, as there is discipline for those who serve in the fighting forces. But Britons have never, in practice, agreed to this view. As soldiers, sailors and airmen they accept discipline. As industrial workers they reject it, and claim personal liberty, even at the risk of weakening the war effort. It may be that, in the last resort, they are right in this, however unreasonable and dangerous it seems. Ideally it should be possible to accept a moratorium for freedom during war, in the factories as in the fighting line. But the fighting line is for war only. The factories are for peace as well. If freedom goes there even for a while, are we sure of recovering it later? Unreasoning rejection of industrial discipline even in war, however dangerous in itself, is perhaps the last ditch against totalitarian rule for all time, in war and in the peace thereafter.

The invention of the Ministry of Munitions was wholly good. Of another dramatic move of Lloyd George's one cannot speak so clearly.



## FOOD MINISTRY AND AFTER

The overthrow of the first Coalition and establishment of the Lloyd George Government in December 1916 had in it both good and bad. It was good to establish a small War Cabinet able to reach and record decisions. It was good to make the personal contacts that Lloyd George did with the Allies. On the other hand, some of his appointments at home were far from good. And having overthrown the Asquith Government for lack of vigour in organising war, it seemed to me at the time that in some respects he failed to go even as far as they would have gone in organising man-power.<sup>1</sup>

Lloyd George had a bias against the Civil Service and all established authority, and a passion for new brooms. I used to say of him that if he were watching a trial in a court of justice, he would always mentally transpose the judge and the prisoner and put the former into the dock to prove his case. His prejudice for new men was entertainingly illustrated at one of his early office conferences in the Ministry of Munitions when he was being angry about delays in transport. He asked who was in charge of a particular form of transport. An officer stood up. "How long have you been here?" asked Lloyd George with a growl and a frown. "Since yesterday evening," came the answer. The frown gave way to smiles. The new broom was welcomed—till he too should be old.

Lloyd George was not a pleasant master in the war, above all if one was an established civil servant. He could not be trusted to trust those who worked for him, and was continually seeking new men. One could not be sure of being backed by him if, in carrying out a policy laid down by him, one found oneself in a sticky situation. In a conversation with my mother in June 1918, I told her how Lloyd George had, on more than one occasion, advised Lord Rhondda to get rid of me, though there was no fear of that sort of thing now.

He no doubt honestly thinks I'm no good. He has a bias against all civil servants and anyone who has worked for him. The latest—Sir Alan Anderson—is a striking case. He's an extremely competent and pleasant man, and made a great success of the Wheat Commission. But sticking in Lord Pirrie no doubt made his job impossible.

It's all right being an official in ordinary times. But not with L.L.G. Government.

In respect of both the points noted here, Lord Rhondda, my other master during World War I, presented a striking contrast to Lloyd

<sup>1</sup> See p. 140 above.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR I

George. In choosing men for Government work, he started with a great belief in the permanent Civil Service instead of starting with a bias against it. Having chosen his men, he trusted and backed them.

Rhondda's contribution to the conduct of World War I was of a different scale than Lloyd George's, but in its narrower range was as notable. As I wrote soon after his death: "the official lives of Food Controllers before him in other countries had been generally unpopular and short and nothing had occurred to suggest that a different fashion could be set in this country. The revolution effected by Lord Rhondda in the popular estimation of food control is the most obvious testimony to the success of his work."<sup>1</sup>

The main instrument of Rhondda's success was his treatment of those who worked for him. He got the best out of men by trusting them with responsibility and backing them. In describing elsewhere how rationing was launched in February 1918 I have given the most striking instance of how this affected me personally. This was when, at a meeting of those who were to administer rationing in two days' time, Stephen Tallents and I on the platform were pressed to postpone the scheme, on the ground that it could not be ready in time; neither the forms nor the food would be available. We refused to accept any resolution to postpone. We said that at most we would tell Lord Rhondda of the meeting but we were sure that he would not sanction postponement. We did not, in fact, tell Rhondda about the meeting then, or till all was over.

This personal experience of the strength given to subordinates by Rhondda's attitude towards them, I have described already in greater detail. Another experience affecting another officer is worth recording here for the first time. I was once with Rhondda when a deputation of meat traders came to protest to him against something that his meat department, in the charge of Frank Wise, was doing. Rhondda listened to them and at the end said: "I have paid great attention to what you say, but I have put this matter in the hands of Mr. Wise and I am sure that what he is doing is right. I am not going to change it." The deputation was hardly out of the room when he turned to me and said: "You know, I am not really sure that Wise is right." That was typical of Rhondda's practice of backing up his subordinates and thus making it possible for them to take responsibility.

One other feature of Rhondda's administration must for completeness

<sup>1</sup> *D. A. Thomas: Viscount Rhondda, by his Daughter and Others*, p. 218. Cited also on the next page of this volume. See p. 245 below for an even higher appreciation of Lord Rhondda's work in *The Times* of March 16, 1921.

## FOOD MINISTRY AND AFTER

be recorded. This was the care that he took with public relations. I give an extract from what I have written at greater length elsewhere:

Sometimes, indeed, he appeared to earnest officials seeking instant decision on concrete points to be wasting a good deal of his own time—and of theirs while they waited—in interviewing journalists or discussing economic theories. Lord Rhondda's invariable accessibility to journalists and stray inquirers, however, was in no sense an idle taste. It was an essential part of his policy.

He was profoundly convinced of the importance of securing a "good press" in support of the bold measures which the times demanded. As one of his officers put it, he set up a "press barrage" of favourable opinion behind which his department could work without disturbance.

In doing so he came perhaps nearer to reproducing in war-time the ordinary function of the ministerial head of a department than many, if not most, of the war-time Ministers.

. . . The decay of Parliament made attention to the press and to other means of contact with the general public even more important than before. Lord Rhondda made this his special and personal task. With a true instinct he devoted to press interviews, deputations, and general publicity, rather than to departmental detail, the time which in other conditions would have been absorbed by Parliamentary duties.<sup>1</sup>

Someone told me once that trust of subordinates was part of his gambler's technique in business. Having appointed three men to three different jobs, he left each of them absolutely alone, content if two out of three chances came off. But this did not explain it all. In the days when I worked for him, he had a kind heart for his staff. There was one particular officer whom the rest of us thought of not much use to us and deserving to be returned, with graceful thanks, to the organisation which had lent him to us. We sent him in more than once to Lord Rhondda to receive the thanks and the parting word. He came out on each occasion beaming with pleasure over his talk—and with a new lease of unproductive life.

Another story current in the Ministry tells how, one May morning, after Rhondda had fallen ill never to return, his Parliamentary Secretary, J. R. Clynes, heard a tramp of men in Parliament Street, and looking out saw a procession making its way, with faces set and no flags, to the

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 246-7.

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door of the Ministry below. "Who are those?" he asked anxiously. "These," answered his private secretary, "are probably some of the people who claim that Lord Rhondda promised them knighthoods or C.B.E.s."

My time at the Ministry of Food is itself an illustration of his kindness of heart and unwillingness to make changes of staff. He came to the Ministry with the idea that he would have to get rid of me. But having talked to me he let me stay. Later, on the eve of rationing, he was pressed by the Prime Minister to make a change and appoint some new Director-General of Rationing and Distribution. He did not feel able to refuse, but he displayed a masterly inactivity, while the Germans kept the Prime Minister busy. So Tallents and I were left free to save our reputations and to help to make Rhondda's.

Lloyd George and Rhondda were as unlike as two members of the same race could be. It takes more than one sort of man to lead in winning a total war. It takes perhaps yet another sort of man to secure the fruits of victory.

## Chapter VIII

### LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS REMADE

The University years are a blessed interval between the two disciplines that make up life—a sudden freedom. . . . Every man is known best by the way in which he uses riches, and the greatest of riches is freedom.

Director's Address to New Students, October 1929.

**I** BECAME Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science in the University of London on October 1, 1919. I remained Director for eighteen years, taking me from the age of forty to the age of fifty-eight. They were years of great and varied activity, as such years should be. They illustrate the main theme of this volume, of Power and Influence as the means of change, in a new field, of a University in place of a Government department. They furnish material for four chapters overlapping in time.

The present chapter is concerned with the change of the School of Economics, from being a small institution of part-time teachers and adult students, to being a large institution of teachers mainly full-time and students mainly of ordinary undergraduate age. The next chapter shows how the University of London acquired a home of its own in Bloomsbury. The third chapter records some of the other activities, public and private, of affairs and of writing, for which time remained to me in those years. The last chapter of the four rings down the curtain on various illusions which had amused the world and me since the Armistice of November 1918.

The School of Economics, born in 1895 of an idea and a small legacy, illustrates the greatness of the Webbs more than anything else that they did.

Others than the Webbs, in the close of the nineteenth century, were deploring the state of economic studies and were urging action to make better provision for such studies. The Webbs took action. "Ideas may come to many men. Sidney Webb had the master gift of making ideas viable."<sup>1</sup>

The Webbs had many other ideas than the School of Economics in

<sup>1</sup> This and the next quotation in the following paragraph are from a chapter contributed by me to a book on *The Webbs and Their Work*, edited by Margaret Cole (Frederick Muller, 1949).

## THROUGH WORLD WAR I

their mind, among them promotion of Socialism and of a Labour Party. But they put the School first. They believed that the impartial scientific study of society would further the Socialism which was their practical aim, but they were prepared to take the risk of being wrong in that belief. The School of Economics was their favourite child, dearer even than Fabian Socialism. They chose all the first four Directors of the School—W. A. S. Hewins, Halford Mackinder, Pember Reeves and myself. Only the third of them could be described in any way as a Socialist; each of the first two became a Conservative Member of Parliament. "The School of Economics was the Webbs embodied in an institution. In his dealings with it, Sidney's qualities of super-human industry, breadth of view and absence of personal egotism were illustrated again and again."

During World War I the School had shrunk to small activities, with Pember Reeves a part-time Director only, and with administration in the hands of a devoted Secretary, Miss C. S. Mactaggart. With the end of the war the School stood on the threshold of great developments. An active Vice-Chancellor of the University, Sir Sydney Russell Wells, was carrying through the Senate a plan for establishing a Commerce Degree which would be centred at the School of Economics. An appeal to the City and the City Companies would provide money for building. A great endowment for teaching posts had been secured by Webb from the Sir Ernest Cassel Foundation. That the Founders of the School at this moment should invite me to take charge of their favourite child was as great a compliment as any man could desire.

It was a compliment falling in with my wish to become once more a writer of books, rather than minutes, official memoranda and Acts of Parliament. On my prospect of gratifying this wish Sidney was emphatically reassuring. Halford Mackinder had run the School "with two fingers of one hand." I should be able "to write one, two, as many books as I wanted, as quickly as I wanted."

Things did not work out in that way. The copy of *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry* which I dissected and mounted on sheets in 1919, with a view to preparing a revised edition, remained untouched till 1929. Instead of writing books, I found myself absorbed in a fascinating adventure of fresh construction, with many sides to it, in a field hitherto unknown to me. I was fortunate in being able, almost from the beginning of my time in the School, to bring J. there as my most constant helper. Miss Mactaggart, who as Secretary had been a central figure in the School, was getting on in years and looking to retirement. Early in

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1920 she became Dean with special responsibilities of looking after the growing student body, and J., who had stayed on in the Ministry of Food, became Secretary to the School. Three years later Miss Mactaggart retired completely and J. took on her work as well. It would be idle to attempt to separate what came from her mind and what from mine, of most of the new things that between us we invented.

The teaching staff of the School, when I came to it, consisted almost entirely of part-timers; they came there on the stated days of their lectures and hardly at any other time. The students came there almost wholly for lectures, largely in the evenings, or for reading in the library, where there were in total less than fifty readers' places. Practically none of the teachers had a room of his own. Professor Foxwell prepared his lectures at a table in a room known as the Senior Common Room, where professors left their hats and coats while they were teaching. Theodore Gregory turned the Assistant Lecturers' Common Room, lit by a skylight, into his study. The Students' Common Room could seat at most twenty people at a time. There was no athletic ground, sport being confined to occasional mixed hockey.

The School had a substantial site at its disposal provided at a nominal rent by the L.C.C. Our first task was to cover this site as far as possible with buildings, for which some money was in prospect from the City for the Commerce Degree while more came in the nick of time from the University Grants Committee. Sir William McCormick, Chairman of the Committee, had been the lecturer on English Literature at St. Andrews and J. had been a favourite student of his; the two were delighted to meet again in a University. The foundation stone of the first new building was laid by H.M. the King in May 1920 and thereafter building became perpetual. As soon as we came within sight of covering the land we had, we stretched out—to get, first, the west side of Houghton Street by promoting a clause in the L.C.C. Powers Bill,<sup>1</sup> then oddments in Clare Market, then a large area east of Houghton Street. The School was defined by one of the teachers once as that part of the University of London on which the concrete never sets. My way of putting it, as a good Wordsworthian, was that beauties born of hammering sound passed unceasingly into our teaching. At the end of World War I the land and buildings occupied by the School were valued at £70,000; thirteen years later they were put at £500,000 and much was still to come. Physically the School was a post-war creation.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 9, in Note on Memorandum of July 1925 to Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial.

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The buildings were only a means to changing the character of the teaching and of the relations of teachers to one another and to the students.

When I came to the School as Director, there were as full-time teachers two professors, both recently advanced to that position, one reader, and a few of lower rank, seven or eight in all. When I left, there were nineteen professors, fifteen readers, twenty-one lecturers, and twenty-one assistant lecturers and assistants—seventy-six in all—on full time, with another forty-five giving part-time. When I came, the minimum salary of a full-time professor in the University of London was £600 a year; the School of Economics was the first College to establish £1,000 a year as its minimum. We were also the first to add to all full-time salaries of teachers and senior administrators educational allowances at the rate in 1925 of £30 a year for each child between thirteen and twenty-three while in full-time attendance at an approved place of education. J. and I, in advocating this new departure, found strong support from the Vice-Chairman of the Governors, Josiah Stamp, who knew about such allowances from his Wesleyan Methodist connection.

We wanted the teachers of the School to be able to spend their whole lives there. One of the most important decisions of early days was the decision to provide a private room for every teacher; such provision was not then or for long afterwards the rule in other London colleges. There followed the decision to replace the dependence of students on lectures only by the maximum of personal contact between them and individual teachers. After their first year at the School, students working for any of the ordinary undergraduate degrees—as a rule either Bachelor of Science in Economics or Bachelor of Commerce—became attached automatically to the teacher concerned with their honours subject; continued increase in the number of full-time teaching posts made it possible for this attachment to become real rather than formal. In their first year, while preparing for an intermediate examination of general character, students were not even formally the special interest of any teacher.

To fill this gap, we introduced, as soon as numbers of staff permitted it, a system of first-year Advisers of Studies, each responsible for a group of students, usually eight to twelve in number, and a plan of first-year essays on general subjects. I had not forgotten the revolutionary effect upon me in my first weeks at Balliol of finding myself required, by a notice in the front porch, to break my mathematical studies in order to produce an essay for the Dean either on the use made by Socialists of Ricardo's Law of Rent or on the use made by eighteenth-century poets



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of supernatural machinery. I have sometimes wondered whether the opening of my mind would not have been still more startling if, by a mis-typing of the Dean's notice, I had been asked to discuss the use made by poets of Ricardo's Law of Rent or the use made by Socialists of supernatural machinery. J. and I persuaded the Professorial Council of the School to let us try a modified form of the Balliol system, by which students in their first year should learn, not only economics, but the art of self-expression.

This was part of our purpose of establishing the School of Economics on its undergraduate side as a place of general education. In my first public lecture at the School in October 1919 I looked back on the profession which I had left—the Civil Service in Peace and War. A year later I felt that I knew enough about my new profession to hold forth on "Economics as a Liberal Education." Twelve years after, I described the School to the Headmasters' Conference as, on its undergraduate side, a place of general education in living humanities, with modern in place of ancient languages as the literary basis, with study of living and changing societies in place of buried ones to broaden the mind.

I did not, I think, cut much ice with the headmasters in 1932, in urging a trial of modern in place of ancient studies. I had the bad taste to quote the classics against the classics.

The ineptitude of education in unrealities is not a new theme. Petronius Arbiter put the point with his usual vigour, through the mouth of one of his characters, in the first century A.D.: "And that is why it seems to me that our young men at college turn out so very foolish because they are never taught or shown anything about the ways of our modern world. Their studies are all of pirates standing in chains on the seashore, of tyrants writing decrees to require sons to cut off their fathers' heads, of oracles advising the immolation of three or more virgins in time of pestilence, of jammy mouthfuls of fine words, and everything made spicy and juicy to their taste. People reared on such things have no more chance of getting common sense than those who live in a cook-shop can smell like violets. . . . When they enter the market-place, they feel as if they had been dropped on to a different planet." These words apply expressly, as all that has been said by me above applies expressly, only to the education of adolescents, that is to say to the last years of education before the threshold of an active career is reached. They have no direct bearing on teaching at an earlier stage. Petronius' criticism of unrealities at

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the adolescent stage is entirely consistent with Plato's commendation of the use of myths to excite the imaginations of children. The educated adult is one who has learnt to apply imaginative insight not to "pirates standing in chains on the seashore" but to the world in which he lives, and to the problems that face him there.

That is the object of general education in the humanities. From that point of view, some of the subjects that pass for humanities (and not in the classics only or only at the ancient Universities) are as dead today as exhausted coal-mines. In them the pupil cannot be fired by watching his master learn; he cannot feel that they bring him understanding of the active world that he is about to enter. It is time to leave them to specialists. They are not good general training grounds for youth.<sup>1</sup>

This address gave me occasion for surveying the student body of the School after thirteen years of my Directorship. From being a resort mainly of people already at work and coming for evening or occasional study, it had become on a large scale a resort of young people preparing for life. Of the 1,200 regular students in 1932, 200 were post-graduates working for higher degrees, and 1,000 were undergraduates. Of the 1,000 undergraduates, 600 were day students and 400 were evening students. Half the graduate students and 200 of the undergraduates—300 in all—in our University body came from overseas, literally everywhere from China to Peru. I used to "collect" students from Liechtenstein or Iceland, as once I had collected rare postage stamps.

J. and I, working now in a modern University, each came from an ancient University. We remembered how much in undergraduate days we had owed to the physical beauty of our surroundings, opening our eyes and hearts and minds, teaching new values. We could not reproduce in Aldwych the historic façades and the natural beauties of Oxford and St. Andrews, but we could try for a few interiors as distinguished and as beautiful.

We made a series of new library rooms, each designed to be a pleasure to the eye and a pleasure to work in, with largely individual lighting for each reader. We thought of the ears as well as the eyes of the readers; they must be defended against noise, from Clare Market with its night and day printing presses, from Houghton Street with its traffic, from students in cheerful talk or shouting. Unlimited thought and care were given by J. and our architect F. R. Jelley to the scientific deafening, out-

<sup>1</sup> Address printed in *Contemporary Review*, March 1933.

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side and inside, of rooms which should be quiet. As our post-graduate work grew in scale and importance, we provided, away from the distractions of the general rooms, separate cubicles for picked researchers, where books could be kept as long as they were needed.<sup>1</sup> The School of Economics had begun as a library, by a characteristic device of Sidney's for avoiding liability for rates.<sup>2</sup> When I left the School, it had become, with many other changes, an enormous library, with basement book-stores over most of its site and with places for 620 individual readers.

We made also the Graham Wallas room, designed at the top of a tower, for quiet discussions such as he rejoiced in. High up also was the "barley-sugar room" so-called from the twisted pillars of the fire-place—a gay and cheerful place, the scene of the annual dinner to the President of the Union and his colleagues, and of many other parties. One of the most memorable of these was when the *Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* sent from Paris a Rugby football team to play the School side, an introduction in reciprocity between the two capitals and their University Institutions. When launching the School of Economics for London, Sidney Webb had used the *Ecole Libre* in Paris as example. So this party was a meeting of mother and daughter.

The crown of our building, for beauty, was the Founders' Room at the top of everything. Sir William Nicholson's picture of Sidney and Beatrice, their dog, and their papers and proof sheets, dominated the room from above the great fireplace at one end. At the other end, in the long outer wall, one of the windows was designed to form almost a semi-circle, with vitreous glass in the panes, catching the maximum of sunshine and giving a wide view of London. J. was the creative inventor of the room, though, of course, she sought and received support to the full from the architects and also from Alan Walton, a noted interior decorator. The hangings were given by an Austrian, George Tugendhat, whom I had met on my visit to Vienna in 1919 and who came to the School thereafter as its first ex-enemy student.

The Founders' Room was not a room for work or meetings or noisy talk. It was a place for sitting and quiet reading without smoking, for making music and for hearing music; we bought a pre-war Bechstein piano for this purpose. The room was used only for special functions. I remember, for instance, giving there the account of *My Utopia* which furnishes the head-note to Chapter V, and I gave there some of my

<sup>1</sup> We allotted to the 300 post-graduates also a large common room separate from the rooms of the undergraduate body for relaxation and social occasions.

<sup>2</sup> *The Webbs and Their Work*, pp. 50-1.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR I

later addresses to new students. "All that you are going to get in this place in the next four years you will owe to the Webbs." The most special of all occasions in the Founders' Room was its inauguration in June 1927, when Jelly d'Aranyi played her violin to the Prince of Wales, now Duke of Windsor, who, as the first Honorary Master of Commerce, came to the School to meet fellow-graduates in Commerce and to dance at our Commemoration Ball.<sup>1</sup>

But a setting for functions and festivities was not our principal aim in the Founders' Room. Once I took a group of students to have their first look at it. They walked to the door chattering cheerfully to one another and to me. The moment that they passed the door, their chatter ceased; they became all eyes, drinking in beauty. I felt that the room had shown its value. As J. and I left it, the Founders' Room of the School of Economics was one of the loveliest interiors in London.

From my second year in the School I took to giving an address of welcome to new students. My early addresses were severely practical—as to the need for attending lectures or how to use the library and so on. But, as such matters came to be dealt with by written instructions or first-year advisers, my addresses became exhortations reflecting the changing world of that day. The head-note to this chapter comes from one of these talks. Another is quoted near the end of this chapter. Yet another, given on return from one of my many American visits of these years, is printed nearly whole in the Appendix, with sentences from other years.<sup>2</sup>

There came each year some new development of corporate student life: reorganisation of the Students' Union to make each regular student automatically a member; purchase of a twenty-acre athletic ground at Malden; inclusion of two badminton courts and a squash court in the School structure; acquisition of a mascot—a carved wooden beaver presented by two professors, J. and myself; acquisition of a motto—in Latin—*Rerum Cognoscere Causas*; establishment of a Commemoration week in June. This was a week of festivities varied by Oration Day when the Director reported on the past year and a distinguished visitor gave an address. One of our early orators, in June 1924, was Mr. Churchill, still in the political wilderness of middle-parties and independent candidature. He spoke—admirably of course—on learning to write and speak English. Shortly after, as I was careful to record, "he became

<sup>1</sup> I have related already elsewhere how my mother coming to this party, completely deaf, left it with an unexpected trophy—an autographed note of appreciation from its principal guest (*India Called Them*, p. 366).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, Section 8.

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somewhat unexpectedly Chancellor of the Exchequer," and in that capacity, as one of his first acts, increased materially the Treasury Grant to Universities. He also returned to the Duke of Bedford in March 1925 the Bloomsbury site bought by the Government from the Duke six years before for the University of London. But, having done this, as is told in the next chapter, he and his officials gave invaluable help to the University in its troubles.

I did not myself give regular teaching in the School; I had not the leisure of mind to be fresh enough for that. But, in my third year, I joined with a group of writing practitioners—John Bailey, Robert Lynd, Clifford Sharp, J. C. Squire—to give a course on Composition, Expression, Style and Appreciation. We took our job seriously, classes for essay correction alternating with lectures. I led off with the opening lectures. For lucid writing "Every sentence must have the meaning intended by the author; must not even for a moment suggest any other meaning; must contain as few words as possible. . . . In words if nowhere else economy is efficiency. . . . A gilded lily is a spoiled lily." In later years it seemed better to have one teacher for the course as a whole.

Though the School of Economics became, during my time there, a place of undergraduate education on a large scale, the special interest of its Founders had been in something different. Their School "was from the beginning designed to provide, not a general course for young beginners, but an introduction to independent research work for maturer people with some knowledge of the world." So Professor Hayek summed it up in his Jubilee article on the School in 1945.<sup>1</sup> The first interest of the Webbs lay in advancement of knowledge of human society by systematic research. The same interest was the force that led me to the School as Director in 1919. I went in hope of advancing knowledge of human society myself and of helping others to do so. In pursuit of that hope I came to set before me three principal aims.

The first aim was that of treating economics, politics and other social sciences primarily as sciences based on observation and analysis of facts, rather than analysis of concepts. This was the central purpose of the Webbs; I was merely following in their footsteps. They put this purpose sometimes as that of "breaking up economics." In place of a single Professor of Political Economy cerebrating indoors on whatever problem took his fancy, they contemplated a number of specialists making observations and each becoming expert in a different field. Under-

<sup>1</sup> *The London School of Economics 1895 to 1945 (Economica, February 1, 1946).*

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standing of human society must be advanced first and foremost, as understanding of nature had been advanced, by specialisation.

The second aim was that of preventing specialisation from leading to narrowness. All the specialists should work in a single institution, so that mutual criticism and co-operation became natural. This too was a Webb idea; the Founders of the School drew their circle wide. The London School of Economics and Political Science was always misdescribed in its title; from its beginning it included, not economics and political science alone, but statistics, sociology, geography and several branches of law; anthropology was added in 1903. I pursued this Webb idea to its logical conclusion; the London School of Economics ought to be a School of all the Social Sciences. My first practical inference from this lay in strengthening greatly its legal side. I contrived to get one of the new posts on the Cassel Foundation in 1920 made into a Chair of Industrial and Commercial Law. Three years later came a Chair of English Law—the first full-time professorship of law in the University of London. I felt happy in being able to persuade my former teacher of law at Oxford—Edward Jenks—to leave the Law Society and become the first occupant of this Chair. With the coming of Edward Jenks and other full-time teachers of law both in the School of Economics and in the other Colleges concerned with legal studies (University and King's), it became possible to arrange, for the first time, a day-time course for Law Degrees in London.

My third aim was that of including in the scope of the School so much of the natural sciences concerned with man as seemed to bear directly on human society. This aim, though implicit in some of my first utterances at the School, took practical shape only after a meeting in 1923 with Beardsley Rumel, then Director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial. This was a fund established by Mr. John D. Rockefeller I in memory of his late wife, and built up by him to a very large amount. My impression is that Beardsley Rumel told me that the original purposes of the fund had been practical—for the relief of poverty—but under his guidance it was being directed more and more to the promotion of social science as the most important means available for ending poverty; at that time it was independent of the main Rockefeller Foundation. While I was in Liverpool for the British Association in September 1923, being in that year President of the Economics Section, I received a postcard from Graham Wallas telling me that Rumel was in England, that it was important that I should see him, that J. also, as Secretary of the School, should see him, and that he was ready to come to Liverpool to meet us.

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I was very busy at that moment attacking Maynard Keynes with one hand and Dr. Marie Stopes with the other hand on "Population and Unemployment." This made it all the more important for J., then on holiday with her family in Callander beyond Stirling, to help with Ruml. I wired to her; she came and was the first to see him. She laid the foundation of a firm alliance with him, which opened a new chapter in the history of the School and of the University of London.

The immediate fruit of the first talk was a small grant for building and \$20,000 a year for four and a half years to provide research assistance to teachers—an invaluable aid for saving them from drudgery in pursuit of new knowledge. Our talks made it clear that Ruml, as Director of the Memorial, had large sums to dispose of, but while ready to help the School of Economics in its established scope, he was interested particularly in getting something new done. This led me to outline what I have named as my third aim—development of the natural bases of social sciences, in particular Anthropology, Psychology and Biology. There followed, after discussions on both sides of the Atlantic, a magnificent series of grants: in September 1925, \$155,000 for what I described as "prior needs" of the School (including accommodation, library binding and catalogue, and a full-time Chair of Political Economy); in January 1927, \$500,000 as endowment to promote the study both of the natural bases of the social sciences and of modern social conditions; \$200,000 as endowment of international studies, including a Chair of International Law; \$175,000 for building and subject catalogue of the library.

The essential parts of the School's Memorandum of July 1925 which led to these grants are set out in the Appendix to this volume.<sup>1</sup> The "prior needs" were met at once; the new idea of the "natural bases of the social sciences" took time to germinate and ripened only after a journey to the United States at Christmas 1926. This journey yielded successes of many kinds which I reported as usual to my mother, on the way home in January 1927.

On Board the Cunard R.M.S. *Aquitania*.

Saturday, January 15, 1927.

I got aboard here about midnight and we sailed at 4 a.m. There was rather confusion coming aboard, as the single cabin which I had been promised had been occupied meanwhile by a lady, so I have to share with a man from New Zealand. It's a bit cramped but nothing much to complain of.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A, Section 9.

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My coming aboard was cheered by a letter from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial saying that they had definitely voted the money for which I had asked, viz.:

\$700,000, i.e. £145,000 endowment for teaching and research in Social Sciences and International Studies.

\$175,000, i.e. £35,000<sup>1</sup> for building a library development.

This is £180,000 altogether and makes us very rich.

I've also a letter in my pocket from Mr. Rockefeller which means ultimately saving the whole Bloomsbury site—but this is very secret.

I've also got Professor Allyn Young, and I've prepared the way for Phil to go to America and earn his living there for a year at least before he settles down in England.

So practically I've succeeded in all my objectives.

The letter from Mr. Rockefeller comes into the next chapter. The securing of Allyn Young from Harvard to be the first full-time Professor of Political Economy in London marked the progress made by the School in international repute; Allyn Young was an outstanding figure at one of the leading Universities in the world. The arrangement for Phil Mair—my cousin and now my stepson—gave him the chance of seeing the life of Pekin, Illinois and the distribution of electricity under Samuel Insull. It may be added that the "confusion" about my cabin was cleared quixotically by J. R. M. Butler. He also was a traveller home by R.M.S. *Aquitania*; he had secured a cabin to himself which suffered no invasion; he insisted on my moving there as his senior; so far as I know, he made friends with the gentleman from New Zealand.

The Laura Spelman Rockefeller grants transformed the financial position and the possibilities of development of the School. Chairs of Anthropology and International Law were established at once and occupied by Bronislaw Malinowski and Arnold McNair. A Chair of Social Biology followed in 1930, as soon as it appeared that a suitable first occupant could be found in Lancelot Hogben. A New Survey of London Life and Labour, to follow Charles Booth's revolutionary inquiry, was undertaken as soon as a suitable Director was found in Hubert Llewellyn Smith, my former chief at the Board of Trade.

The most daring of these developments—the Chair of Social Biology—proved to have been too daring. Contrary to what we had said in our memorandum of July 1925, we did in the end give Lancelot Hogben a small biological laboratory in Houghton Street; it seemed a pity to let

<sup>1</sup> £35,000 as given in my letter in round numbers should strictly be £36,250.



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his genius as an experimenter rust. He did some brilliant work of many kinds with us but he did not find himself happy in the School. After six years he took an opportunity of escape to the Regius Chair of Physiology at Aberdeen. Lancelot Hogben was the first and till now the last Professor of Social Biology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. I return to this subject in Chapter XI.

With the growth of the School in size, and still more with its change of character from a place of part-time to a place of full-time study and teaching, new problems arose as to its government. The constitution of the School, before I came there, was described by one of the Committees of Inspection which descended from time to time, on behalf of the University, upon its Colleges, as a "benevolent autocracy." Certainly the part-timers forming the teaching staff took little part in its affairs, other than giving their lectures. The Professorial Council of twenty met twice each year, at the beginning and end of each session. Apart from this quite formal proceeding, they had no opportunity of discussing either as a Council or through Committees questions affecting the interests or policy of the School as a whole. Until the very year of my appointment, when the Professorial Council were given three representatives on the Court of Governors, none of them had any occasion for meeting any Governors. How appointments were made, I am not sure, but certainly there was no formal procedure for consultation with the teachers already there. One of the early complaints made to me by a senior teacher was that an assistant had been appointed to him without notice to him.

All this was so contrary to my ideas of collegiate co-operation that my first act of any importance at the School was to invite the Professorial Council to appoint an Office Committee, to advise me on administrative matters with an academic bearing, including such questions as allocation of fees, allocation of rooms, and admission of students. This Committee was established in October 1919—my first month as Director.

In July 1921 three larger changes followed. It was arranged that the Professorial Council should meet twice a term in place of twice a year. The Library Committee was reconstituted to include always three representatives of the teaching staff. An Appointments Committee of representatives of the Professorial Council was set up, to advise the Director on all appointments to the regular teaching staff or important changes in the status of teachers. The Office Committee, with whom these larger changes had been discussed and formulated, was continued in a less important form and ultimately disappeared.

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At the same time the Governors of the School were made more active. They, like the Professorial Council, had met twice a year. In 1921 an Emergency Committee of the Court was appointed, in the first instance to give formal assents that might be required for acquisition of land. Once established, it continued indefinitely and became in practice the governing body of the School, kept small enough for real discussion. In 1925 its constitution was amended to include always two representatives of the Professorial Council.

Ten years later, in 1935, the constitution of the School was under formal discussion, with reference to the possibility of seeking a charter of incorporation. I produced for my professorial colleagues a memorandum of Reflections on the School, with minutes showing how even my most daring experiments, like introduction of Social Biology, had received the formal approval of the Professorial Council, after lengthy discussions with the teachers concerned. I cited as proof of the complete independence of the teachers from administrative control the fact that the academic developments of the School, within the range of my special interests, had not been those that I would have favoured:

In so far as I am (or was) an economist, my interest has not lain in those theoretical and mathematical developments which have become characteristic of the economics of the School of Economics. But the economic professors, like all other professors of the School, have had absolute freedom—and help from me—to go their own way. More than that—I believe that freedom of a professor to develop his subject in his own way involves, ultimately, in a large institution, the choice of subordinate staff, and I have acted on this belief.

I went on to admit that the economic professors showed no lack of goodwill towards me. They were as ready to help me to go my way—provided that they did not have to come with me—as I was ready to help them, on the same terms.

I ceased to be an autocrat at the School as rapidly as I could. My continuing power came only from having the initiative and a central position, and from the time that I gave to being Director. My aim was to make the senior teachers feel a corporate responsibility for the School corresponding to the unity of the social sciences. But there is an aspect of teacher activity in the affairs of a College which has more than one side to it.

Administration of an institution as large and complex and constantly changing as the School had become a continuous task; it could not be

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compared to administration of an Oxford or Cambridge College. To use on administration the time of a great teacher or researcher is misuse of rare faculties; it is misuse which men of the highest gifts as a rule take care to avoid. Gregory Foster, the Provost of University College, once said to me sadly that he had tried often to get one or other of the real leaders of thought among professors to take part in University or College affairs but had tried in vain; they preferred their laboratories or their libraries. The professors who threw themselves with zest into administration were not as a rule the men best at their academic subjects.

J. and I, as the principal administrative officers of the School of Economics, conceived our function, not as that of getting our way, but as that of setting the academic staff free for their essential tasks—for teaching and inspiring the young, and for advancing knowledge in their own fields.

There was another aspect of the relations between academic and practical life which had special importance for the School of Economics. The subject of the greater part of our studies was the raw material of government. It was natural that some of the teachers of the School should pass to the practical side of their subjects and become active politicians. Clement Attlee was a member of the School staff as Tutor and Lecturer in the Social Science Department when I went there; but he left three years later when he embraced a political career on election to Parliament. H. B. Lees-Smith was also on the staff; Sidney Webb, I understood, had thought of him as Director. One of my first appointments was that of Hugh Dalton, returning from the war. Another was that of Harold Laski, urged on me by Graham Wallas to rescue him from an uncomfortable position at Harvard; he did not enter Parliament, but sat for many years on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and was its Chairman in 1945. "He desired to be the *éminence grise* of the Labour Party"; so a recent biographer puts it.<sup>1</sup> Later came Philip Noel-Baker, serving as Professor of International Relations from 1924 to 1929, and others.

One of the few questions about the position of the Director which, before my appointment, I raised in correspondence with Sidney Webb—the only Governor whom I saw—was the question whether I should be free to be a candidate for Parliament. I raised it less for its own sake than as a sign of escape from the restrictions of the Civil Service in which I had spent ten years; I had no political ambitions. The answer of the Governors on this point was studiously vague. Three years later there

<sup>1</sup> *Harold Laski*, by Kingsley Martin, p. 98 (Gollancz, 1953).

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seemed to be a chance of the question arising practically; at the election of November 1922 the suggestion was made to me by the Provost of Oriel, L. R. Phelps, that I should stand for the University of Oxford, with Gilbert Murray, as a Liberal. I consulted Sidney Webb and he was clear that, if I wished to stand, I might. He was standing himself as Labour candidate for Seaham, and Mackinder as Conservative for Camlachie; we should make an excellent trio, though he thought poorly of all our chances. Webb was wrong about his own chance, but right about Mackinder, and would have been right about my chance. In the event the Liberals of Oxford found that they could not raise the money for my deposit and the invitation evaporated.

After another ten years of experience in the School, I had come to a different view as to the possibility of combining a political career with an academic career in social science. I took as subject of my address to new students in October 1932, the contrast between the scientific spirit and the practical reforming spirit, and the possibility of conflict between them:

Science and practical reform are different—call ultimately for different qualities—cannot always be served together.

The practical life, for instance, is largely concerned with taking decisions; when the right decision is not absolutely clear yet one must decide on something. The essence of science is to say nothing until one is absolutely sure. Practical life is like a journey; when one comes to a fork in the road and there is no signpost or it cannot be read clearly, one must go on in one direction or another, or stay where one is and starve. It is often better to take some course than none at all; even if the way one takes is not the shortest, it may bring one nearer to one's ultimate goal; even if it does not bring one to the goal one desires it may bring one to another as good or at least acceptable. In practical life, one is continually taking decisions about which one is not sure; and the capacity to take decisions, and having taken them to hold them, is the basis of success in all practical careers, and in the conduct of public affairs. But science is not like that. The scientist is the man who has to put the writing on the signposts or at least say what should be put there, to show the world what will follow from going down one road, and what will follow from going the other. His first duty, until he knows what will follow beyond all doubt, is to say nothing at all. The scientific faculty and the practical faculty are thus in themselves somewhat different.

Those who spend their whole lives in scientific work tend to

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become unpractical—indecisive. Those who spend their whole energies in advocating this or that practical reform tend to become unscientific. If at a fork in the road, before you can see clearly what is on the signpost, you decide that one road is the right road and go down it, and urge others down it, you will come to believe it. The politician is like the man in the poem: "What I tell you three times is true." I can illustrate the opposite effect of that by the rule of silence in the Civil Service; it produces impartiality. Members of Parliament cannot be scientific or impartial.

I told the young people, that most of them would not go into the world as scientists. They would be dealing with practical affairs and I hoped that they would have plenty of the reforming spirit, for there was much to be done. But at the School they should seek to learn something of the scientific spirit. "If you miss other things here you miss what may be valuable. If you miss that, you miss what is vital."

I had the best of reasons—in personal experience—for understanding that exploration of new fields of thought as a scientist and serving tables as an administrator<sup>1</sup> do not go well together. My position as Director of the School of Economics left time and energy for many other things than being Director. But it did not allow me security from interruption in research. My work as Director had always to come first; it could not be limited to fixed hours; it was fascinating in itself, as a succession of new problems, as an opportunity for construction, as a means of contact with youth of many nations.

So the things that I did outside the School, often in themselves of great interest and hard to avoid, became largely episodic: tasks that could be taken up and dropped again for a while without disadvantage. Much even of the scientific work that I attempted became episodic. My intellectual curiosity was aroused repeatedly by some new problem—of the periodicity of weather, of the changes of human fertility and their causes, of the history of prices, and so on—which I took up and carried on till I was interrupted. On all the topics named in the last sentence and on many others I had part-finished work of, I believe, some real value in hand when I left the School of Economics. I took up that unfinished work again at Oxford in 1937. But in 1939 came another and, till today, a final interruption.

My experience from 1919 to 1937 illustrates from a special angle the central theme of this volume—the difficulty of combining pursuit of

<sup>1</sup> Acts vi. 2: It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

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knowledge and wise influence in human affairs with pursuit and exercise of power. I came to the School of Economics at forty with the hope of changing the character of economics as a branch of human knowledge. I had, I believed, the intellectual gifts for that; my first book, written at twenty-nine, had been accepted as breaking new ground. But that book had been written when I had no responsibilities except earning my living in ten evening hours a week; I could be as free of interruptions as I chose. I had no power and no need to spend time on its exercise.

At the School of Economics I never had power in an absolute sense. From the beginning I worked persistently to make such power as I had a thing to be exercised only in consultation with my academic colleagues, carrying them with me. The one important power that remained always to me and to J. was that of initiative. But however I limited my power by consultations I could not get rid of responsibilities.

After ten years at the School, I found myself exploring continuously ways of leaving, not the School of Economics, which I had come to love, but the position of Director in it. I sought to return to influence based on knowledge, to give up power completely.

## Chapter IX

### THE BLOOMSBURY SITE AND ITS RESCUE

We cannot build, we do not need to build again, Oxford or Cambridge or St. Andrews. But London remains. The chance of London, when all chance seemed lost, by this miracle of generosity from overseas, has been restored to us.

Speech at Graduation Dinner of University  
of London, May 11, 1927.

#### 1. *The Site is Offered and Withdrawn*

THE University of London, when I knew it first, was not easy to find in London. Its administrative offices and seat of government were in part of the Imperial Institute Building in South Kensington. Soon after I became Director of the School of Economics, I had occasion to visit this seat of government in a hurry. The cab-driver, when I asked for the University of London, looked blank. As I explained, a light broke on him. "Oh, you mean the place near the Royal School of Needlework." I discovered that this was what I did mean. There was in Imperial Institute Road an institution devoted to the art of needlework, and advertising itself by a notice-board of exceptional size. Turning off at this notice, one came in due course to a flight of steps at the head of which, in a good light, one could read, on one side only, the name of the University of London.

I did not, for some time after this discovery, have reason to repeat the journey. The School of Economics was one of the larger Colleges of the University of London. But its Director as such held no position in the University. Under the constitution of that time, dating from 1900, the government of the University rested with a Senate of fifty-six members. About a third of these were chosen by the teachers in their various Faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine, Laws, Music, Engineering, Economics and Theology. About the same number were elected by the graduates of the University, also by Faculties. The remaining third, described familiarly as the *tertium quid* of the Senate, were appointed by other authorities—the Crown, the London County Council, the City Corporation, the four Inns of Court, and the Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons. The *tertium quid* included also four nominees

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of University and King's, the two largest Colleges of the University, which soon after 1900 became legally incorporated in it.

Apart from University and King's, the other Colleges had no place in the Senate which governed the federation of which they were part. Yet it was important for each College to have its executive head on the Senate, if possible, and in one way or another this was accomplished for nearly all the larger Colleges, by getting their heads elected as representatives either of teachers or of graduates.

When I became Director of the School of Economics, I might have gone to the Senate as representative of the teachers in the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, as one of my predecessors—Halford Mackinder—had done. The existing Faculty representative—Graham Wallas—characteristically offered to resign his position and work as senator, in which he was deeply interested, in order to make membership of the Senate possible for me. But Sidney Webb, who thought of all things, thought of a better way. Many years before, Pember Reeves, when Agent General for New Zealand, had been appointed one of the Crown members of the Senate; it was thought appropriate that the Empire should be represented in the University of the capital of the Empire. When Pember Reeves became Director of the School of Economics in succession to Mackinder, he continued on the Senate as Crown member. When he left the School he had no further interest in the University, but his membership of the Senate did not lapse. Sidney Webb suggested to the appointing authorities that it was natural for myself, in succeeding Pember Reeves at the School, to succeed him also as Crown nominee on the Senate. As soon as it was clear that this suggestion would be accepted, Pember Reeves resigned from the Senate and before the end of 1919 I found myself a member of that body. By this ingenious transposition of qualifications I was enabled to play an active part in the most dramatic crisis of the University's history. This is the story of how the Bloomsbury site for the University Headquarters, in the moment of being lost, was rescued, to become the scene of Charles Holden's masterpiece. How the crisis arose must first be recorded briefly.

The University of London till 1900 was legally an examining body only, equally ready to examine, on identical terms, those who were taught in colleges in London, those who were taught in colleges and institutions elsewhere, and those who with or without formal teaching prepared themselves for examination in any quarter of the globe. Yet by 1900 London had teaching and researching institutions of



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University standard exceeding in scale and scope almost any other University in Britain—University College and King's College, each larger than most British Universities, and each older than the examining University itself; the institutions which came together in 1907 to form the Imperial College of Science and Technology, unique in its own field; an array of distinguished medical schools; the new but intensely vigorous London School of Economics; Bedford College, the pioneer of University Education for Women; East London College grown out of the People's Palace; and many more.

The people interested in examinations irrespective of teaching and those interested primarily in teaching and research formed two zestfully contending elements in the University. They fought themselves to a standstill before successive Royal Commissions which examined University Education in London, the Selborne Commission reporting in 1889 and the Cowper Commission which sat from 1892 to 1894. They went on fighting with undiminished zest after the second of these Commissions had reported. At last, under the London University Act of 1898, there emerged in 1900 a compromise constitution, with the University becoming both teaching and examining, and with the two sides, "internal" and "external" as they came to be called, represented equally on the Senate. Sidney Webb, one of the contrivers of this constitution, often said to me that he was not proud of it. His concern, however, was not to get the best constitution; it was to discover something which would be accepted sufficiently by the contending parties to have a chance of being tried. Haldane, the other chief contriver of this constitution, said much the same as Webb about it. He not only helped to invent the constitution, but persuaded the Conservative Government of the day to try it on the House of Commons, and persuaded the House to accept it.<sup>1</sup> Haldane and Webb were proved right by results. There were many battles still to come, but the compromise constitution did in the end make possible the growth of a real University in London.

With the new constitution came a change of headquarters. The examining University had been housed in Burlington Gardens, at the expense of H.M. Treasury. The compromise University, by a Treasury Minute of February 16, 1899, was to be provided with "a dignified and suitable home" in part of the Imperial Institute Building at South Kensington, and was promised also "such provision as may hereafter be

<sup>1</sup> See *Richard Burdon Haldane—An Autobiography* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1929). The account of the London University affair at pp. 123-9 is well worth reading still as a rare example of the House of Commons on a non-party issue being converted by a single speech.

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needed for the full extension of the University" under its new constitution. Burlington Gardens became available for another examining body—the Civil Service Commissioners.

The new University grew rapidly in all faculties. The quarters first allotted in the Imperial Institute became obviously insufficient. Moreover, to most people concerned with the teaching side of the University in its Colleges and Schools, it was clear that these quarters, though they might be dignified, were not suitable. They were remote from most of the students and teachers. In them the University Library, including the unique Goldsmiths' Economic Collection, was housed in passages and administrative rooms, inaccessible to readers. Above all, they did nothing to make the existence in London of the largest British University known to the citizens of London.

Within a few years of the move to South Kensington, the Senate, as governing body of the University, became divided between the policy of using the Treasury Minute of 1899 to extort more space at South Kensington and the policy of using it and influential members of the Government to get headquarters dedicated wholly to the University on a site nearer to the main teaching Colleges. The former party were those to whom the University was first and foremost an examining body for Britain and the British Empire—the external members of the Senate, elected by graduates. The latter party were the teachers and administrators concerned with institutions in London itself—the internal members. The efforts of the latter party issued by 1910 in the self-appointment of a body of influential but unofficial Trustees, who marked down a site immediately north of the British Museum as the ideal headquarters of the University and began to collect funds for it. Their activity stimulated alternative suggestions, including the Foundling Hospital and Somerset House, and no conclusion had been reached when World War I descended on the world.

The end of the war found a great University figure at the Board of Education. Mr. H. A. L. Fisher persuaded his Cabinet colleagues in 1919 to let him try the Senate of the University of London with an offer, not of a meagre two or three acres of Bloomsbury, but of an adequate site and buildings there, to be provided at the cost of the Government. He tried this out through the Vice-Chancellor of the time, and, not unnaturally, found adequate support. Thirty-two members of the Senate were in favour without reservations of accepting such an offer if made, eleven were prepared to do so on conditions, thirteen were against doing so or sent no answer. Having regard to the magnificence of the offer,

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the significant surprise is that there was so large a minority of objectors or doubters.

Unfortunately, before Mr. Fisher could get further, the economic weather was transformed; slump succeeded boom. When, on April 7, 1920, Mr. Fisher made a formal offer to the University, it was of a bare site, with no word of money for buildings and with a condition attached to it. The Senate were invited to accept eleven acres in Bloomsbury (including roads and open spaces) "for new Head Quarters of the University and for Colleges and Institutions connected with it, including King's College, whose premises in the Strand are now inadequate for its needs." It was made plain that acceptance of the Bloomsbury site implied giving the Strand site to the Government. The grand offer had become a transaction with two sides to it, something like a business deal. Mr. Fisher, however, had put himself into a position to make the offer by actually buying the Bloomsbury site for £425,000 from the Duke of Bedford as from March 31, 1920, with an option to return it and recover the purchase money at any time in six years—up to March 31, 1926.

It was on Mr. Fisher's offer of the site that I made my first appreciable contribution to the business of the Senate. The offer had been made after preliminary exploration had shown a favourable augury of Senate opinion. The offer came before the Senate in July 1920 from their Site and Accommodation Committee with a recommendation for acceptance on conditions. But the opponents of Bloomsbury, marshalled by Sir William Collins, the Grand Old Man of the External Party, carried an amendment saying that the Senate were unable to arrive at a final decision. This last pronouncement might have wrecked the scheme, so when the amendment came before us as a substantive motion, I moved an amendment to it, recognising and welcoming the desire of the Government to help the University, saying that in view of the importance of the issues and the uncertainty of the nature of the offer in some respects, the Senate wanted more time for consideration and consultation with the Government, and requesting the Government to keep the offer open to allow for this. This amendment, being seconded by another back-bencher, was carried in its turn and accepted. I learned from this that one could be almost certain of carrying any resolution on an academic body, if the resolution postponed decision—even a decision not to decide—and provided for more discussion later. As Edwin Deller, then Academic Registrar of the University, used to say to me—whatever the question, if you propose more discussion later, you will see the white hands of the senators rising automatically.

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Delay on this occasion made possible a reversal of the negative decision implied in Sir William Collins' resolution. Mr. Fisher agreed to keep his offer open over the Long Vacation. When the matter came before the Senate once more in October 1920, the advocates of Bloomsbury had rallied their forces. By thirty-one votes to twelve, the Senate accepted the offer—so far as the Senate could do so. They could not bind the King's College Council to surrender to the Government the site at King's College in the Strand. That remained for further examination.

My first appearance in general University affairs, in July 1920, was also my last for another five years and more. The Senate, like most assemblies of Britons, kept new boys in their places. I was not admitted to any of the important Committees, such as those dealing with Site and Accommodation, or Co-ordination and Developments, or Finance. I had plenty to occupy my time at the School.

In addition to the site question, controversy had been roused just before the war by yet another Royal Commission under the Chairmanship of R. B. Haldane (who became soon Viscount Haldane). The Report of the Commission, published in 1913, appeared to threaten the continuance of the External Degree, that is to say of the system by which a large proportion of the degrees of the University were given simply on examinations, without requirement of study or membership of an institution. Action on this Report had been held up by the war, but now a new constitution for the University was in prospect. The supporters of the External Degree had organised for its defence, and practically all the representatives of graduates on the Senate owed their election to the University of London Graduates' Association whose rallying cry was "The External Degree in danger." Their active leader was Dr. Graham Little; William Collins remained their big gun, for use on big occasions.

There was no necessary connection between the two controversies—about the University site and the External Degree. But the most conspicuous early proponent of Bloomsbury—Lord Haldane—appeared also as an opponent of degrees by examination only. On the other side, the proponents of the External Degree saw nothing wrong with South Kensington as a University Centre.

Nevertheless, in the immediate aftermath of the war, a large majority of the Senate took a different view and favoured removal of the University Headquarters either to Bloomsbury or to some equally central situation. Unfortunately the Government's condition to the offer of the site, that King's College must move to Bloomsbury and surrender to the Government the Strand site on which it worked, was a condition which

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no majority on the Senate had power to satisfy. King's College, other than its Theological Department, had been incorporated in the University and was subject to the Senate. But the site and buildings where its work was carried on had not been transferred on incorporation. They belonged to a body known as King's College Council which managed the Theological Department. The King's College Council refused to surrender their Strand site, either for nothing as the Government proposed in 1920, or for £370,000 which, after four years of argument, the Government offered for it, on their own valuation. Since the Council had been told by the valuer of the London County Council that their site was worth anything from £800,000 to £1,000,000, their attitude cannot be condemned as unreasonable.

Mr. Fisher's offer, admirable in intention, had too many Treasury strings to it. By June 1925 it was clear that the Government and the King's College Council could not come to terms. The Senate, recovering from the Long Vacation, wrote in October 1925 to ask if they could have the Bloomsbury site or any part of it for University purposes other than immovable King's College; an important new venture—the Institute of Historical Research—had managed to squat on the site in Army huts. The Government for six months sent no answer to this letter, and then, as the six years of their agreement with the Duke of Bedford were running out, again without a word to the University, in March 1926 they returned the site to the Duke and recovered the £425,000 which they had paid for it.

### 2. *The Site is Won*

It was at this point that I came in again. During the dying throes of the Government offer of the site, from September 1925 to the following March, I had been engaged mainly on other than academic work; I was down the coal-hole, serving as a member of the Royal Commission on Coal Mining. When the Government's return of the Bloomsbury site to the Duke became known, I received an S O S from the Principal Officer of the University, Sir Cooper Perry, to come and do something about it; as was not unusual between us, this message was couched in Latin—he bade me emerge *ex umbris et imaginibus tuis* to the world above coal mines. I came and moved at the Senate of March 24 a resolution that we should ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had just recovered £425,000 from the Duke of Bedford, to receive a deputation from the Senate, so that he might consider whether this money or some of it might not come to us for University purposes. My resolution was

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seconded by Herbert Eason and carried with little debate. As mover of the resolution, I suggested names for the deputation—all the elder statesmen of the Senate. I could not decently name myself—I was still a new boy—but I had the wit to name Graham Wallas, and he had the wit to say that he could not serve and to suggest me instead. No one had the quickness to say him nay. This was an object lesson to me of the importance, in public assemblies, of hunting in couples. I wanted to be on the deputation to the Chancellor, if only for the reason that the Chancellor was my old chief Mr. Churchill, but I could not propose myself. By Graham Wallas' help, I was made a member of the deputation, and thus, for the first time, I broke into the heart of University affairs.

Very soon I found myself in them up to the hilt. The leader of the External party, Graham Little, had succeeded in winning the London University seat in Parliament at the General Election of 1924. He was now put forward for election by the Senate as Vice-Chancellor in June 1926. His election would mean good-bye to Bloomsbury for all time.

The Internalists on the Senate considered anxiously whom they could nominate to beat this move of the Externalists. The obvious nominee was Sir Gregory Foster, Provost of the University College, head of the largest College of the University, with many years of service on the Senate. But the very importance of University College weakened the election prospects of its Provost; the other Colleges, beginning with King's College, would be jealous and afraid of him. Gregory Foster would have liked to be Vice-Chancellor, but he was against standing himself on this occasion. He and others with him came to the conclusion that the strongest candidate that they could put up to keep Graham Little out was myself—hardly known in the Senate either for good or evil after six years there, though well known outside. Having reached this conclusion, Gregory Foster, above all, worked to secure my return.

It proved to be a desperate fight. With the Faculty and the Convocation members lined up all but equally on opposite sides, success depended on the *tertium quid* and we knew that some of these—including most of the lawyers—were already in the Little camp. The election was the first business of the June meeting of the Senate. On election, the new Vice-Chancellor was in office at once; he went straight to the chair and conducted the rest of the business. To prepare for this, it had become customary for each of the rival candidates to be taken through the Senate Agenda by the Secretary of the Senate, a day or two before, on separate days. On the election day itself, we went to sit together in the

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Vice-Chancellor's room a few doors away from the Senate Room, while the Senate went through their first business of deciding which of us should be Vice-Chancellor, and should conduct the business that followed.

The morning's news had been bad for my prospects. Three doctors whom we had counted to be neutral at least were said to have come off the fence against me; defeat seemed likely. As my opponent and I sat in the Vice-Chancellor's room we could see through the open door the passage to the Senate Room and the senators going to their meeting. As I watched, the omens became more favourable to me. On the one hand, I saw three aged and distinguished senators whom I had never seen at a Senate meeting; I knew that most of these non-attenders, if they came at all, would, under Gregory Foster's persuasion, be for me. But I could not believe that they would come, till I saw them. On the other hand, the threatened *démarche* of doctors against me did not materialise. With my three most aged supporters, I ought to poll twenty-five votes and be safe.

Through our open door we heard the murmur of our supporters' speeches; we heard a roll-call proceeding; then silence; then at the door of our room were my proposer, Sir Wilmot Herringham, and my seconder, Professor H. G. Atkins. This meant that I was chosen. They came to conduct me to the Senate. There the former Vice-Chancellor told me of my election, put his robe round me and put me into his chair.

In due course I learned that I had secured twenty-six votes against twenty-one for my opponent. My majority of five was made by five members who between them had scored only ten attendances at the Senate out of a possible fifty in the preceding year; they were not likely to attend more often in the coming year. It was not going to be easy to keep a majority for any policies which my defeated opponent disliked.

Just before the election, he had made his dislike of Bloomsbury clear. He was, of course, a member of the deputation appointed on my resolution of March 24 to wait on Mr. Churchill as Chancellor. He wrote to warn me that if at the deputation controversial matter about Bloomsbury was introduced by me or anyone else, he would feel bound to break in and present the view of the large section of University opinion opposed to removal to Bloomsbury either of the Headquarters or the Library.

The deputation, as it happened, was received by Mr. Churchill in the week before the Senate had to choose a Vice-Chancellor, and I had been charged to speak about the Bloomsbury site. My remarks led, not to interruptions by Dr. Little, but to vigorous interchange between Mr. Churchill and myself as to the nature of the Government offer and the

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responsibility for its failure. It seemed to him an extraordinary and lamentable state of affairs that a great University should be paralysed by one of its Colleges and be prevented from acting on the Government's offer; we should now look into the matter and see what was best to be done. With others of the deputation I persisted in defending the Senate; it might be lamentable, but it was undeniable that the Senate could not dispose of a site which did not belong to them. Finally Mr. Churchill proposed a further meeting in the following week. My comment on this was that he gave himself time for reflection.

The delay gave time also for the Senate deputation to commission William Collins and myself to prepare a memorandum making plain the nature of Mr. Fisher's offer. We addressed our argument pointedly at Mr. Fisher himself; he had been tutor at New College, Oxford, and soon after 1920 became its Warden. Suppose, we said, that the Government had offered to the University of Oxford all the land between Cornmarket and the railway station, on condition that New College, as the second largest College, moved there, so as to be near to Christ Church as the largest College, and surrendered its own site and buildings to the Government, either for nothing or at a price fixed by the Government. Could the University be blamed if New College, an independent sovereign state, refused to move? Could the Fellows of New College be blamed as unreasonable?

The second meeting with Mr. Churchill, suggested first for June 22, was postponed till June 29. By that time I was Vice-Chancellor and leader of our deputation. Moreover, at Mr. Churchill's request, I had talked on the day before with Sir George Barstow, who was Treasury Adviser on University affairs. Fortunately I had known Barstow of old, in labour exchange and unemployment insurance days, and had found him one of the best of the Treasury officials to deal with. Our talk made it certain that something positive and practical would result next day from the deputation. I followed the talk on the same day by a letter, typed with my own hand at home, setting out the case for a substantial grant of money, in place of the Bloomsbury site which the Government no longer possessed. At the second meeting the Chancellor began by admitting the justice of our defence of the Senate. He was sure that the original Bloomsbury offer was made with a real desire to help the University rather than strike bargains with them, but he appreciated "now that the offer was made subject to conditions with which it was not possible for the University themselves to comply." The Chancellor went on to offer not less than half of £425,000 but "not much more"



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for building at South Kensington and for University Institutions such as the Institute of Historical Research, the Library, and the Officers' Training Corps, subject to the University submitting a scheme. An effort made by myself to lure the Chancellor into offering more money to match anything that we might get from elsewhere was unsuccessful. "We do not want the British Government to be mixed up with what I may call coaxing and wheedling cash from the United States." These words proved awkward later, when Rockefeller aid came in prospect, and I had to get them explained away.

The position to which I had been elected by five votes on June 24 was one of peculiar solitude. The Court, with its succession of distinguished Chairmen, which now controls the finances of the University, had not been established. The Principal Officer of the University (he was not then the "Principal") was Sir Cooper Perry, due to retire at the end of August; his successor, Dr. Franklin Sibly, would come as raw to University affairs as I did. It was a time to walk warily till I knew the ground.

My election as Vice-Chancellor kept alive the possibility of doing something at Bloomsbury. It did not at first suggest revival of the full Bloomsbury scheme. In a memorandum submitted by me as Vice-Chancellor to the Co-ordination and Developments Committee on July 14, reporting the result of the recent deputation, I accepted the continuance of the central administrative offices of the University at South Kensington, as I had done in my private letter of June 28 to Barstow. I proposed then spending up to £120,000 on reconstruction of the Headquarters at South Kensington and up to £200,000 on securing part of the Bloomsbury site. These proposals were described as "a compromise involving concessions by both the principal parties into which the Senate had been divided on the subject of accommodation."

Mindful of the five votes by which I had become Vice-Chancellor, I wanted, if possible, to agree with my opponents, and carry them with me. I did not succeed. My compromise was carried at the July Senate against fervent opposition of the Externalists to doing anything serious at Bloomsbury. It was carried, however, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was asked if he could not stretch his £212,500 to £280,000 at least.

This done, the Senate adjourned for three months. In that interval the aspect of affairs changed completely. On the one hand, the more closely the project of building at South Kensington was examined as a practical measure, the less attractive did it become. On the other hand, unsolicited and unexpected, there dawned the prospect of help from

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America for the Bloomsbury scheme. Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Foundation, who had come to London on other business, asked to see me, went over the site with me, and made it clear that the Foundation were interested in the future of London University. He made it clear also that they were interested in big things, not in tinkering. A project which left part of the University at Kensington and brought merely a fraction of it to Bloomsbury would not appear significant enough to justify a grant.

So Fosdick wrote to me on September 27, in reply to a letter which I had sent to him from Scotland early in August but which had to follow him round Europe. He ended by suggesting that when I came to New York at Christmas, as I was due to come on School of Economics business, I should discuss the situation at length with Dr. Wickliff Rose and others of the Foundation. With that I had to be content, though I was far from clear that I could hold the Duke of Bedford and his Trustees in play so long. They had just paid £425,000 to the Government to recover the site, and they were anxious to develop it.

Fosdick's letter made it plain that if I wanted Rockefeller Foundation help I must make a case to the Senate for more than my compromise proposition of July. I had to make the case without mentioning the Foundation or Fosdick; all this was a deadly secret. On one side, the case made itself, as the University architect examined the possibility and cost of reconstructing the University's share of the Imperial Institute Building into an office and library. The architect's report on this proposition, which came before the Senate in October 1926, convinced me that the proposition should be abandoned. I wrote to Gregory Foster on November 1 that the time had come for a frontal attack on South Kensington as the University Headquarters.

While the architect had been discovering the incurable unsuitability of the Imperial Institute Building for our purposes, I had been engaged on a statistical exercise to make the other side of the case for Bloomsbury—based on geography. I plotted the position of the eighteen larger schools of the University in London (all those with more than one hundred registered students) in relation to South Kensington and to the Bloomsbury site, and compared the distance, time of travel, and cost of travel, to each of these alternative centres. Two of the eighteen schools with ninety-four teachers and 822 students were nearer to South Kensington.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These two were the Imperial College of Science and Technology, which at that date kept aloof from the University, and St. Mary's Hospital, the Medical School of my opponent Dr. Little.

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Sixteen schools with 681 teachers and 7,257 students were nearer to Bloomsbury. The average distance per student as the crow flies was 2·82 miles to South Kensington and 1·28 miles to Bloomsbury. The minimum times of travel to the two spots averaged twenty-six minutes and sixteen minutes respectively; the minimum cost of the journey averaged to South Kensington 3·3d. and to Bloomsbury 1·4d. These were a few only of the weighted averages, centres of gravity and so forth which embellished my memorandum. Yet prudently I did not limit the argument to figures, and I did not forget the external side of the University, concerned for students outside London.

As a parallel to the chart of the schools, I drew a chart of the fourteen main railway stations through which many of the external students would have to make their way to examinations. Two of the stations were nearer to South Kensington; twelve were nearer to Bloomsbury, which lay right in the midst of them; the centre of gravity of the fourteen railway stations proved to coincide almost exactly with the centre of gravity of the eighteen schools. In relation to underground railways and trams the advantages of Bloomsbury were still greater. "From the point of view of transport, the interests of the external and of the internal sides of the University agree in pointing to Bloomsbury and away from South Kensington."

I completed this memorandum of frontal attack on South Kensington about November 10 and sent it in draft to Gregory Foster and three or four other allies, for criticism before it went to the Senate. It began with my statistical disquisition on "The Natural Centre of the University" and went on to "The Practical Problem," that is to say the building disadvantages of South Kensington, as revealed by the labours of our architect. Foster's comment was incisive; the statistical disquisition was too long for the senators to read, and should go after, not before, the practical discussion. "I am afraid," I answered him, "that there is not the least doubt that you are right and that I ought to reverse the order of the arguments, which (with many groanings) I am doing. I propose in fact to put the whole of the 'Natural Centre of the University' into an Appendix where its length won't matter."

This change of order was one of the wisest tactical moves of the campaign for Bloomsbury. The Memorandum on the University Headquarters, circulated to all members of the Senate before the end of November, became readable and unanswerable. In one of its first paragraphs it described and scarified the existing accommodation at South Kensington and dismissed the possibility of satisfactory reconstruction. It

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proposed, as a simple and economical alternative to futile reconstruction at South Kensington, the keeping of the Imperial Institute as it was for examination purposes and erecting elsewhere a new building for offices and meetings, for the library and for other central institutions. It showed that the same capital expenditure would yield more and better accommodation if devoted to a new building than if spent on reconstruction. At the same time the old building would remain at the University's disposal for examinations and other purposes.

There followed the argument for putting the new building in Bloomsbury rather than in South Kensington. No one was compelled to read this argument at length, since it was relegated to an Appendix. Its results were summed up for easy digestion in two sentences: "All that is said there merely illustrates, from different points of view, the simple thesis that if there is to be a single University of London with any unity of spirit, its headquarters must be central. The placing of these headquarters excentrically to the main body of teaching institutions sets up a strain which weakens the whole structure, exhausting the time and energy of teachers and students in needless journeys, making them feel the University as something alien and remote, divorcing the administration of the University from its teaching and research."

No reasonable senator who got as far as this could doubt the main advantage claimed for building something new at Bloomsbury rather than tinkering at South Kensington, that "for the same capital expenditure it gives more and better accommodation in the right place rather than in the wrong."

Leaving the senators to digest my memorandum with their Christmas dinners, I went off to the United States in December. I travelled by the *Celtic* from Liverpool in a week which included Christmas. Among my fellow-travellers was Miss Margaret Bondfield, who a few years later became the first woman Cabinet Minister. There were also troops of children; I had the impression that it was easier and cheaper to get a passage by travelling at this unusual time.

Just before leaving England I had done what I could to keep the Duke and his Trustees in play, by sending a long personal letter to Colonel Gordon, the Duke's principal agent in this business. I placed all my cards on the table, even to the extent of indicating my Rockefeller Foundation hopes, without mentioning any names. "If certain personal negotiations which have now begun go as I hope they will, I may by the end of January be in a position to ask your price or make an offer for the whole or nearly the whole of the site originally sold to the Government.

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... If, however, I do have control of resources on this scale, my use of them in relation to the Bedford Estate rather than elsewhere will depend, not only on price, but also on being able to re-create something like the original scheme."

My negotiations in New York went beyond my hopes. The official purpose of my journey was for the School of Economics, to seek further grants for the School from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial. But I saw almost at once, on December 30, Raymond Fosdick and Wickliff Rose of the main Rockefeller Foundation, wrote for them at their request a lengthy memorandum about the Bloomsbury site, and came back to them on January 14. It became clear that the Foundation would be ready to solve our financial problem if they were asked to do so; they would find the money needed to complete the purchase of the whole site if the Senate would ask for this for University Headquarters, and if the Duke would sell it. I was by that time fairly confident that the Senate could be persuaded to make this request, but they could hardly do so before late in February. How could we make certain that meanwhile the Duke would not dispose of a vital portion of the site to someone else?

Here Mr. John D. Rockefeller the Second came in. It seemed to him that the obvious plan was to ask the Duke at once for an option on the site. The Rockefeller Foundation could not provide me with funds to secure an option; they could act only on a request from the University, and this, he knew, I had no authority to make. But there was nothing, he said, to prevent him as an individual putting me in funds as an individual to ask for an option on the site. He called in a secretary and dictated and signed the following letter:

26 Broadway,  
New York.

January 14, 1927.

My dear Sir William,

This is to confirm the informal understanding which you and Mr. Fosdick arrived at this morning in regard to the utilisation of the Bloomsbury site by the University of London.

In order to prevent the property under contemplation from being diverted to other purposes while the University has under consideration the question of its future developments in Bloomsbury, I will contribute whatever may be necessary up to \$50,000.00 to secure an option on the land north of Keppel Street, east of Malet Street, west of the line formed by the eastern edge of Russell Square and Woburn

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Square and south of the line formed by Torrington Place and Gordon Square,<sup>1</sup> with the understanding that this contribution does not in any degree commit me to any further action in regard to this property. I should hope that an option can be obtained for purchase on a reasonable basis within a period that will allow an adequate development of the plans of the University. You will know best how long this period should be.

Yours truly,

(Signed) JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, Jr.

This was one of the few occasions in my life when I have felt seriously how pleasant it would be to be able to write cheques on my own account for \$50,000 without consulting my Bank. On the evening of this letter, as I have reported above,<sup>2</sup> I boarded the *Aquitania* to leave New York.

I came back across the Atlantic in the middle of January 1927 with my first hurdle behind me. If money could save the whole Bloomsbury scheme, it would be saved. Apart from its immediate value in dealing with the Duke, Mr. Rockefeller's readiness to put down \$50,000 for an option was a guarantee of adequate help later from the Foundation.

I looked at the two remaining hurdles—of the Senate and the Duke—and found the prospects favourable. As regards the Senate, my ally J. L. S. Hatton of East London College reported to me that the Establishment and General Purposes Committee, examining the South Kensington rebuilding project, were getting "annoyed with the difficulties raised by the Office of Works, and the last document from that body seems to be rendering them more favourable to the proposal contained in your memorandum to transfer the Central Offices to Bloomsbury." The favouring wind, fanned by the convenient intransigence of the Office of Works, continued. By the middle of February, all the three Committees of the Senate directly concerned with the affair had majorities for abandoning South Kensington as University Headquarters and moving elsewhere, if a suitable site could be found and purchased. They reached this point, on the demerits of Kensington, without being told about the hope of Rockefeller dollars. We were due to come to the second hurdle—of the Senate—on February 23; unless by some accident our majority failed, we should get well over.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rockefeller's offer was limited to this northern part of the whole site, only because the University was already in hopeful communication with the Duke about the part south of Keppel Street and had enough money in prospect from the Treasury to buy this southern part.

<sup>2</sup> p. 178.

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There would remain only the third hurdle, of the Duke of Bedford and his Trustees. On this side also, in the first weeks of 1927, the omens were favourable. To my letter sent to Colonel Gordon on sailing I found an answer on returning: he would gladly communicate my letter confidentially to the Trustees. I told three or four of the senators in strictest confidence of my talks in New York and of the money for the option; with their advice I commissioned our surveyor to open negotiations for the whole site. This opening seemed at first to be welcomed.

We reached the second hurdle on February 23 and scraped over. The Senate voted by twenty-one to eighteen to move the University Headquarters from South Kensington. The majority would have been smaller still if one of the senators distinguished for his academic mind had not, on this occasion, voted with me instead of against me as he usually did. I have never discovered just why on this critical day he made our majority into three in place of one. But one would have sufficed and three was ample. This decision of the Senate was reached without knowledge of our hopes from the Rockefeller Foundation. That remained, till March 1927, a secret known only to one or two others besides myself. As I said later in a private letter to Geoffrey Dawson, of *The Times*, "South Kensington as a University centre was killed by argument in the Senate, before it was drowned under the shower of Rockefeller gold."

The second of the three hurdles was behind us. But the third hurdle had just been raised, to appear impassable. In the middle of February, as all Senate Committees were getting into step, there came a bombshell from the Duke and his Trustees. They wanted prices for the land south of Keppel Street which seemed prohibitive. They had decided not to sell the site as a whole and were unable therefore to quote any price to it. They would have nothing to do with my request for an option.

The time had come to mobilise every possible resource for victory at Bloomsbury. I spent the next three days seeing, writing to or cabling to everyone who might help to get persuasion or pressure turned on the Duke—to Eustace Percy as President of the Board of Education to get the Prime Minister to write to the Duke; to William McCormick, Chairman of the University Grants Committee, for advice and to move Lord Balfour, whom J. also approached for me through a common friend; to Frederick Kenyon and the British Museum Trustees; to George Barstow to get me the names of all the Bedford Trustees for individual attack; to Lionel Hitchens, when I got these names, bespeaking his aid with those known to him; to Raymond Fosdick urging him to come over.

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While turning all stones in search of victory, I did not ignore the possibility of defeat; there was no means of getting the Bloomsbury site against the will of the Duke. A week after our Senate victory of February 23, I found myself cabling to Fosdick: "Am practically certain Duke refuses sell whole site—trying secure six acres north Keppel Street." A week later still, I wrote to ask whether the Rockefeller Foundation would help to buy either six acres north of Keppel Street or, if the Duke refused, the Foundling Hospital site.

When the whole sky was dark, there came a break from an unexpected quarter. Lord Chelmsford, returned from the Vice-Royalty of India, had become Chairman of the Committee controlling University College. At the suggestion of Gregory Foster, he came to me to say that he knew, not well, but by way of business, a bank manager who was also one of the Bedford Trustees. Should he see if through this channel he could get a reconsideration by the Trustees of our proposal? I begged Lord Chelmsford by all means to have a go at the bank manager; I primed him, not hopefully, with the arguments. There resulted, two days later, a letter of March 16 written directly to Lord Chelmsford by the Duke. Having been told of Lord Chelmsford's call on the bank manager, the Duke wished to explain the position about the site in Bloomsbury. After declining recently an offer from Sir William Beveridge to buy the whole site, he had received offers and inquiries about it from the Principal Officer of the University and on behalf of one of its Colleges. He was now anxious to end all these negotiations, so as to have the site in his hands free for development without further delay. "But"—here came the most important but in the University's history—"in order to meet your wishes I am willing to consider a definite offer if it is put forward by one individual, empowered by the University to act for all these different interests, and provided the offer can be made within three weeks from the date of this letter."

My feeling at the time was of how fortunate we had been to have a Viscount and ex-Viceroy of India at our call. Mere Knight Commanders of the Bath and Vice-Chancellors did not rise above the ducal horizon. Ex-Viceroy's did—if only just.

The promised land was within reach again. The Senate were due to meet on March 23. I had already told the Committees concerned of the prospects from Rockefeller and was assured of their support. I made certain by a further letter through Lord Chelmsford that the Duke really meant that he would consider an offer for the whole site as bought by the Government. I cabled to Fosdick to be ready with his dollars.



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But we had not done with the last ditchers on the Senate. Gregory Foster reported to me, a week before the Senate meeting, that Sir Philip Magnus, the highly respected former Member of Parliament for the University, had come to him in a state of indignation at the idea of taking Rockefeller money to buy the site; we were in "for determined and organised opposition. The battle-cry was to be 'No American money.'" Full use would be made of words used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to our first deputation in June 1926, appearing to deprecate appeals abroad. William Collins was coming to his last meeting of the Senate, to fight his last battle against us on this issue. William Collins, we knew, was a redoubtable debater.

I wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and received by return the answer I wanted and expected. In his remarks to the deputation he had meant only that the Government could not use its influence to get money from America; if we could get such money for ourselves, he saw no reason why we should not take it. I wrote an S O S to Stamp to come to the Senate on this issue, in spite of his being now one of the Commissioners engaged in drafting the new University Statutes. I wrote to some of our supporters who were being weakened by the argument against American money. I sent to Gregory Foster elaborate "notes of the speech that I should make at the Senate if I were not Vice-Chancellor! You will, I know, be able to make up a much better speech of your own," I had the grace to add.

I was never more right than in this addendum. When on March 27, 1927, the issue came before the Senate finally, Gregory Foster made his own speech, not mine, and it was unanswerable. The Finance Committee recommendation, that the Vice-Chancellor should be authorised to communicate with the Rockefeller Foundation and tell them that the Senate would gladly accept such a grant as with their other resources would make possible the purchase of an adequate site, was moved by the Chairman of the Committee, Holburt Waring. It was met by the expected amendment, from the two leaders of the Externals, past and present—William Collins and Graham Little—declaring it undesirable for the Senate to accept money from the Rockefeller Foundation "in relief of the Government undertaking to provide and maintain an adequate, dignified and suitable home for the University of London." The debate, as I recollect it, was short; Gregory Foster's speech left the amendment with few friends. He destroyed the last fortress of the opposition by twenty-six votes to ten.

About 6 p.m. on March 23, 1927, I was able to send the clinching

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cable to Fosdick. Dated the same day in New York came back his answer.

March 23, 1927.

Duke now willing to sell whole original site. Senate today decided buy whole if possible and authorised me say they would gladly accept grant from you towards this. Will make offer on hearing definitely from you on lines previous cables.

BEVERIDGE.

March 23, 1927.

I am authorised to assure you £400,000. Delighted that property south of Keppel Street is included.

FOSDICK.

I had written out my cable before the Senate's meeting began at 4.30 p.m. and it was despatched while I was presiding continuously over the Senate, who on that day had a terrific agenda of chopped straw as well as the Bloomsbury site; the site question occupies less than two pages out of seventy-two foolscap pages of printed minutes.

### 3. *The Later Stages*

The Senate vote of March 23, 1927, settled the move to Bloomsbury in principle. Much remained to be done, to turn principle into practice.

First, a contract and a price had to be settled with the Duke of Bedford. On March 16 the Duke had written to Lord Chelmsford that he would consider an offer made by one person on behalf of the University, provided that the offer was made within three weeks. He received an offer in eleven days, by a letter from Lord Chelmsford telling him of the Senate's desire and ability to buy the whole site. The terms of the Duke's letter had made it clear that he did not expect any such result. Nor did he welcome the result with open arms or speed of action. But at last in May a price was settled; the Duke would take £525,000, £100,000 more than the £425,000 that had been paid to him by the Government in 1920 and paid by him to recover the site in 1926. The Senate resolution for purchase was unanimous. The recovery of the site was announced by Lord Eustace Percy on May 11 as principal guest at the Graduation Dinner of the University. I made in reply a far too long speech of

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studied eloquence, of which I gave to my mother a foretaste in notes written to her in her deafness:

Lord Eustace Percy is coming to propose the health of the University. This is my reply.

My theme tonight is the University of London—a great theme which I have embroidered tonight with fleeting words.

Give us the means to take that theme and hand it to some inspired artist in steel and stone and marble—not too much marble—and let him embody it in a group of buildings, of surpassing beauty, which later generations will set beside Westminster.

Give us the means to do this without stinting our teachers of their livelihood, our students of sufficient teachers, or researchers of leisure.

Make us part of the great bustling city of London, not apart from it, a sanctuary of impartial learning, a home of perpetual youth.

Lovers of London, lovers of beauty, lovers of learning, lovers of youth—this is a work for them all to share.

Second, the site had to be made into a self-contained whole, by closing the roads across it. With the support of the British Museum Trustees, this was accomplished in my second year as Vice-Chancellor by a clause in the General Powers Bill of the London County Council.

Third, the money for building had to be collected. The University did not start here with coffers bare. We had the Treasury £212,000 and some other balances. We had rents of about £15,000 a year gross from the houses on the Bloomsbury site. In a memorandum prepared for the Senate in October 1929, I calculated that if we wished, we could afford to put in hand at once building work costing £500,000. I did not myself want to treat the Bloomsbury site houses as an investment for maximum profit. I wanted to let them for preference to University teachers and administrators, or as lodgings for students. That was the way to make a University Quarter. In any case, much more than £500,000 would be needed. The getting of that more with so little delay was in the main the work of Lord Macmillan, the first Chairman of the Court of the University, established under its new constitution in 1929. The Court controlling the finances and property of the University became responsible for development of the Bloomsbury site.

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Fourth, an inspired architect for the new building had to be discovered. The Court decided in January 1931 to take the appointment of an architect into their own hands in place of holding a competition; they were looking not for a design but for a man to work with them for years. They set up a Committee of five with the Principal of the University, Edwin Deller, to select and submit to the Court not less than three architects to choose from. The Committee made their selection by a combination of two methods—inspection of buildings *in situ* and inspection of architects round a dinner-table.

Inspection of buildings fell to Deller and myself—the Vice-Chancellor of that time, who was to have accompanied us, being prevented by indisposition. In speaking of Deller after his untimely death in 1936 I described this inspection as the most pleasant to look back on of all our many joint adventures: “We went up and down the length and breadth of England and Wales, seeing town halls and academic buildings, schools, hospitals and cathedrals. We enjoyed ourselves hugely.” Altogether during February we went thoroughly over twenty to thirty buildings, all having some claim to distinction, by nearly a dozen architects. We talked to those who had dealt with these architects and were using the buildings that they had designed. We came back early in March with a list of four architects, all of whom we thought should be seen by the Selection Committee; we kept open the possibility of inviting other architects after examination of their buildings. Of the four we said: “Each of these has proved himself capable of doing work of the highest excellence, and of each of them we have received favourable personal accounts from those who have had to deal with them.”

Inspection of the four architects took the form of four separate dinner-parties at the Athenaeum, presided over by Lord Macmillan. Of one of the four, talk confirmed in our minds, and I think in his mind, the fear that he was already too old for our lengthy undertaking. Of another, talk confirmed in our minds doubt whether he was not too busy and important to place our commission first. The third architect came along having spent the morning in the British Museum and the R.I.B.A. studying designs of University buildings all over the world. The fourth architect came along with a first sketch in his hands. Between numbers three and four the choice was difficult; we felt that either would give us his unstinted best and we knew that his best was good enough. The Selection Committee needed no more dinner-parties; our original four were sufficient to choose from. In the end the unanimous recommendation of the Committee was for number four—Charles Holden. The

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recommendation was accepted unanimously by the Court on May 18, 1931. Deller and I had made up our minds for him long before, though we should have been happy with number three.

Help in selection of an architect was my last substantial contribution to the Bloomsbury scheme. Exactly a month after the choice of Holden I found myself turned off the Court after two years' service as a Senate representative there; my opponents on the Senate won the last round against me. Two years later, in June 1933, the King laid the foundation stone of the new building. Three years later again the University entered into occupation. But Edwin Deller was not there to lead the way. While inspecting the building under construction he was injured fatally by a falling hoist and died in November 1936.

The Senate House, as it was called officially, contained on each side of the main entrance lobby two halls of assembly. One was christened the Macmillan Hall, commemorating the first Chairman of the Court, who did so much and so persuasively to make the building possible; here among other things the University holds its dinners and other feasts; here, as it happened, I expounded the Beveridge Report to an excited and exciting Press Conference in December 1942. The room opposite became the William Beveridge Hall. It was explained to me at the time that to identify it by surname only might lead to misunderstanding of its purpose.<sup>1</sup> It is now the normal scene of lectures and other solemnities like the giving of honorary degrees. In World War II, when the Senate House became headquarters of the Ministry of Information, the William Beveridge Hall was placed at the disposal of journalists of the world.

Fourteen years after the acquisition of the original Bloomsbury site, the University bought another thirteen and a half acres of the neighbouring land and houses. It celebrated the occasion by giving honorary degrees in January 1952 to some of those who personally or as representatives had helped in this, and to myself. In returning thanks for the new graduates, I said something of the first Bloomsbury adventure and of how it illustrated the advantage of personal contacts in getting things done. I cannot end this chapter better than by recalling and expanding what I said then.

To begin with, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to whom we went as a Senate deputation in June 1926, when the site seemed lost, was Mr. Churchill, and his principal Treasury Adviser was George Barstow.

<sup>1</sup> In the printed note of the first day's proceedings before the Private Bill Committee on the closing of roads across the Bloomsbury site (March 28, 1928) I appear as "Sir William Beverage." This is solemnly corrected at the opening of the next day's proceedings (March 29, 1928).

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How much this contributed to a positive outcome from the deputation has been shown above.

To go on with, when I wanted help and encouragement in trying for something worth while in Bloomsbury, I found the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres at hand in his two capacities of Chairman of the British Museum Trustees and Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission. I had known him years before in yet another capacity, when he was Chairman of the Wheat Commission and I was in the Ministry of Food, in 1916-18. We had turned a difficult corner or two together then. Now, whether it was a question of closing roads, or of adjusting the interests of University and Museum, or of finding an inspired architect, he was always our friend. His advice on procedure for appointing an architect proved decisive.

When conversion of our new-won site into an island, by closing all roads across it, became a practical issue, I found myself working with well-tried allies in the London County Council, notably the Chief Education Officer, Sir George Gater, and the Chief Valuer, Frank Hunt. With each of them I had dealt already in solving problems of private legislation for the School of Economics.

But before any such problems could arise for the University came the previous question of persuading the Senate to want the Bloomsbury site. Here the decisive contribution was that of Gregory Foster, Provost of University College. When I came to the School of Economics in 1919 I was told by more than one adviser that I should find King's College the natural ally and University College the natural enemy of my School. When the University's year of fate began in 1926, I was on terms of friendly co-operation with the heads of both these sister institutions. A letter which Gregory Foster wrote to me in January 1925 just before he took a compulsory voyage of health to South Africa is among my greatest treasures:

It has been a real pleasure to work with you and I have been the happier and better for knowing you.

One of the advantages of the big University idea is getting well mixed up with those working at and guiding the other Colleges.

When he wrote this letter Gregory Foster had come to the point, on grounds of health, of feeling bound to resign his post as Provost, but the College rightly would not listen to this. They turned him out for a year's leave, and he came back a giant indeed at the beginning of 1926.

It was Gregory Foster more than any other individual who made me

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Vice-Chancellor in June 1926, though he himself had every prior claim, by service and knowledge, to that distinction. It was to him alone that as early as September 1926 I told of my hopes from the Rockefeller Foundation. It was his drastic criticism that caused me in November 1926 to recast the memorandum for Bloomsbury and against South Kensington that I had drafted for the Senate, and thus to make it persuasive rather than soporific. It was he more than any other who on the floor of the Senate while I sat silent in the Chair fought the monthly battles for Bloomsbury against the Externalists in November and December 1926 and in February and March 1927. It was he, by making on the last of these occasions his own speech rather than what I had suggested to him, who secured a surprising majority, and left William Collins and Graham Little with eight other last ditchers only against the Bloomsbury site.

When my normal two years as Vice-Chancellor ended in June 1928, Sir John Gilbert and others pressed me to go on. But it was clear to me that Gregory Foster, then nearing the end of his University service, had overwhelming claims to the position. And happily—though only by one vote—he was elected by the Senate.

An equal though different part was played by Edwin Deller. A product of the University, on its evening side, he joined the University staff in 1912, became Academic Registrar in 1920, and first Principal under the new constitution in 1929. In a memorial address given at the School of Economics I spoke of him as an administrator. "It is difficult to believe that any hand but Deller's could have steered the University so smoothly through the critical years from 1929 till now." I spoke of him as a colleague: "In all our sixteen years together, I do not remember from him one cross word or a wry act or an assertion of self."

Besides those named already many others played a valuable part in the Bloomsbury battle. On the Senate Holburt Waring as Chairman of the Finance Committee, and J. L. S. Hatton (Principal of East London College) as Chairman of the Establishment and General Purposes Committee, were staunch hard-working allies. There was John Gilbert of the London County Council and there was my proposer for the Vice-Chancellorship, Wilmot Herringham. There was among outsiders to the Senate, Frank Pick, by this time a Governor of the School of Economics. Charles Holden won his appointment as University architect fairly, by decision of many others as well as myself. But I am not sure that I should have explored his work so fully as I did with Deller if I had not heard so much of him through Frank Pick and through J. as well.

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The winning of the Bloomsbury site has not yet realised all the hopes of all those who worked for it. I for one desired the Senate House, the Colleges, the Libraries and Research Institutions which should rise on the site to be no more than the centre of a University Quarter of London, in which a large and growing proportion of all who lived there should be University teachers or students. Once a student talking to me in my early days at the School of Economics had said that he would like to go back at night to a street where all the other inhabitants were University people; even if he did not know them, he would feel at home. The remark stuck in my mind. In the first year of our ownership of the site, when we had acquired many houses with a rent-roll approaching £15,000, I raised with the Senate the question whether these houses should be treated as an investment for maximum income or should, even at some financial sacrifice, be used preferentially for residence by students and teachers. I had no success with my fellow senators then.

But at least the Bloomsbury site for the University makes a University Quarter in London possible, as it would never have been possible without that. A University Quarter may become a reality some day.



## Chapter X

### SIDE-SHOWS OF A DIRECTOR

The process of correcting errors is always longer than that of making them.

Letter to the Editor of *The New Republic*, March 12, 1928.

#### 1. *Writing and Talking in Spare Moments*

THERE was plenty to do in transforming the School of Economics from a small institution into a large one after the coma of World War I. But this plenty of work left time and energy for side-shows. The activity described in the last chapter was hardly a side-show. The School of Economics was part of the federal University of London and its administrative head was expected to play his part in federal affairs.

He was expected also to have time for service to the Government. The most exciting public task that came my way was membership of the Royal Commission on Coal Mines in 1925-26. Happily, this work, though as intense as any that I remember doing in all my life, was as brief as it was severe; as much as it seems necessary to say of this lost endeavour ending in the General Strike is given below. The longest, most pleasant, and most productive of my public side-shows was the Chairmanship of the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee, also noticed below; this ran for ten years, from 1934 to 1944, into my time as Master of University College, Oxford.

There were for me innumerable activities connected with my position in the School. In place of writing books myself, I helped to start others on writing books—notably through the Carnegie Endowment which, under the leadership of James Shotwell, undertook an Economic and Social History of World War I. This was an international undertaking, leading ultimately to 148 volumes in different languages. I became Chairman of the Editorial Board responsible for the British Section. Before we ended, twenty-four volumes stood to our credit, though there should have been more. Another international project arose out of my interest in the history of prices and wages and in bringing Thorold Rogers's pioneer work up to date. With the help of the Rockefeller

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Foundation an International Committee on Price History, with myself as Chairman, was set on foot. This secured the production of a good many volumes, for different countries—France, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain. The British section was planned in four large volumes, of which one appeared in 1939; three others remain partly or not written, with abundant material ready for use.

I did not get as many books written as I had hoped for, or as soon. But after nine years—in 1929—came a substantial volume on *British Food Control*, as my own chief contribution to the Carnegie History of World War I. Two years later came the revised edition of *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry (1909 and 1930)*. Part I of this reproduced without change my first book, published twenty-one years before; Part II was a new book, bringing the story of labour exchanges and unemployment insurance up to date. This portion I submitted as a thesis for the London degree of Doctor of Science in Economics; this was the only way open to me of becoming in 1930 a member of the University of which I had been Vice-Chancellor from 1926 to 1928. The procedure involved getting registered as an internal student of the School of which I was a Director, and finding from its staff an official supervisor of my studies who would become one of my examiners; Lionel Robbins, just appointed Professor of Political Economy in succession to Allyn Young, was the natural choice for this. He had been my research assistant in preparing much of the material for the book and he proved kind as an examiner of my thesis. A year later, in 1931, I collaborated with Robbins and others in a book on *Tariffs* which had the distinction of being translated into German and into Japanese.

Though I did not get all the books written that I hoped for, I was always writing something. A second visit to Vienna in the winter of 1919 produced a number of articles which became a pamphlet on *Peace in Austria*. The discovered misery of Vienna led to an effort to help academic teachers to an income, by starting a Vienna Summer School. At the British Association meeting of 1923 in Liverpool, I gave an address as President of the Economics Section on "Population and Unemployment." This brought into the field against me two diverse adversaries—Dr. Marie Stopes and Maynard Keynes, one of whose incidental observations on the course of population in Britain I had criticised as out of accord with facts. The controversy with Dr. Stopes filled columns of the popular Press. The argument with Keynes reverberated in the *Economic Journal* and *Economica*. A friend told me later that this was one of the few occasions on which Keynes had been shown to be wrong. If he

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was wrong, this was due to a mistake in one of the authorities on which he had relied.

I sent to *The New Republic* in New York an article correcting something that they had published in criticism of the British scheme of unemployment insurance. The quotation heading this chapter is from the letter enclosing the article and apologising for its length. *The New Republic* not only published the article substantially as submitted, but sent me a cheque for it which produced a problem. The article had been prepared at the request of my former assistant, Thomas Phillips, now high in the Ministry of Labour, and was written actually by John Hilton, one of the Ministry staff. He did not want a cheque for doing official work, nor I for work done by another. So we enriched a self-help fund in the Ministry.

I wrote letters to *The Times*, often of interminable length: it gave me pleasure to end an attack on Tariff Reform in October 1923 with a quotation from the *Pervigilium Veneris*:

*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit quique amavit cras amet!*

Mr. Baldwin had just announced his conversion to the need for Protection. I argued that the time called for wholesale conversion the other way. Tomorrow let everyone who has voted Free Trade in the past go on doing so. Let those who have voted otherwise in the past vote Free Trade tomorrow.

I could not avoid—I did not try to avoid—making a certain number of public speeches. At the invitation of my former tutor at Balliol, Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, now become Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, I addressed a luncheon club in that city on population problems and said that, in considering population trends, it was unnecessary to count anyone except the girls; boy babies seemed to matter little. I meant that they mattered little to the statistician, but I forgot to say so. This remark became headline news and brought me shoals of letters, typified by that of a man who found my remark very discouraging to him as a father of boy twins. I went to a congress of University students at Edinburgh in 1934 and described to them as one of the troubles of modern democracies, that in such democracies "men do not often emerge to leadership till they have lost desire to lead—anywhere. Their efforts have been so long bent on gaining power that they think gaining power is enough."

A second trouble is that once they have emerged they never sink back again. The terrible good nature of the British leads to their

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never deposing anybody. . . . Once a Prime Minister, always a Prime Minister, whenever one's party is in power.

That is the Gladstonian tradition, a misfortune in British public life. Today we go one better, or worse. Once Prime Minister, always Prime Minister, whatever party is in power. That is the MacDonald variation on the Gladstonian theme.

I suggested, among other remedies, a new convention of the Constitution—that every Prime Minister seven years from appointment should become a Marquis and so be relegated to the House of Lords. What a terrible time politically those nineteen-thirties were—with the one leader who might have led us at least to preparedness for the coming war kept out of power by his own party!

Three years after Edinburgh I went to a conference on the Challenge to Democracy, organised by Ernest Simon at Ashridge, and, being required to talk on planning, I said that planning under democracy was like breathing under water. This shocked Ernest Simon, but I justified myself firmly. It is perfectly possible to breathe under water, as fishes do, but only if, like the fishes, one develops special organs for that purpose; the special organ needed for successful planning under democracy "is the organ of co-ordinated review and forethought which I have described as an Economic General Staff." I had been hammering at that point vainly for fourteen years.<sup>1</sup> I went on to develop the same theme, with variations, to a Conference of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants. To get forethought into public affairs would not cost much money, but it was essential to spend some money simply on thinking: "a few people should be reserved for thinking and planning, for collecting and comparing information, and should not be expected or allowed to do anything else." This was in July 1937, when I had realised how little time for continuous thought and forethought a busy administrator could find.

There was added in these years between the wars a new facility of public utterance—through broadcasting. Some of my first experiences in this field, and one of the lessons that I drew from this experience for use in 1950, are noted in a section of this chapter.

I crossed the Atlantic for the first time in 1924, for the meeting of the British Association at Toronto, early in August, took the Association

<sup>1</sup> I featured the idea of an Economic General Staff in two articles in the *Nation and Athenaeum* of December 1923 and January 1924. The papers read at the Ashridge Conference, including mine, were published later in a volume on *Constructive Democracy* (Allen and Unwin, 1938).

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trip across Canada to Victoria and on return steamed down the Hudson River to New York, for a talk with Beardsley Ruml about further grants for the School. Thus I had my first sight and hearing of the city which I knew well from the letters of Lafcadio Hearn, the city "walled to the skies and roaring like the sea." I met also for the first time a crossword puzzle, then a brand-new craze in the States and unknown in Britain. Whitney Shepardon gave me a book of puzzles for the voyage home. Until someone proves me wrong, I claim to be the rat that carried this plague to the Old World, in September 1924.

In the next nine years I went to the States repeatedly: for Rockefeller grants at the turn of 1926-27; for an international conference of economists at Hanover in 1928; for lectures and an honorary degree at Chicago in 1929; for price history research at the Huntington Library in 1930; for study of the States in depression in 1933. This last visit, with Arthur Steel-Maitland at the invitation of the Rockefeller Foundation, was an amazing experience, which I recorded in diary and articles; it gave us first personal contact with many notable persons, from Franklin Roosevelt downwards.

The Director of the School of Economics was older than he had been as Director of Labour Exchanges. But enjoyment of physical activity remained. *Irene* was not revived from the mud at Bosham. But my first Riley car, sold half-way through World War I, was followed by successors—Citroën, Talbot, Austin—of increasing speed and amenity. With these successors I scoured Scotland from end to end, at all hours of day and night, in search of mountain tops—from Ben Loyal to Merrick and from the Coolins to the Cairngorms. My record exploit was climbing Ben Lomond at dawn and supping on the same day at Avebury in Wiltshire; I was alone in dense mist on the Ben, and the roads south had Saturday crowds. Enjoyment rather than sense of exploit came through company. Once I joined the cheerful crowd of Rock and Fell Climbers celebrating the centenary of the Pillar Rock above Ennerdale in 1926 and wrote an account of the party afterwards.<sup>1</sup> Once, having left London by a late afternoon train, I collected three young companions and my car at Stoke-on-Trent and we drove in turn through a June night to the Moor of Rannoch where we bagged our peak next day; as we ran to Shap I saw the light of the rising sun begin east of north before the twilight had faded west of north. Another time we drove to Settle in Yorkshire for a night, to see a total eclipse of the sun just after dawn from a neighbouring ridge; as by a miracle, the clouds where we stood were

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Fell and Rock Climbing Club*, Vol. 7, No. 2.

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parted two minutes before totality, to close again five minutes after. So we gained all that we had come for; we saw a solar prominence; we felt the sudden darkness of totality; and I paid my last tribute to my first mistress astronomy. We drove back to London with all the side-curtains flapping, for the Citroën in 1927 was several years past her prime. She could not, I felt, end her service to me more gloriously than by having bagged the only total eclipse visible in England for nearly 300 years.<sup>1</sup> I sold the Wimbledon debentures, with their right to centre court seats, which I had bought in 1919, at a profit large enough to buy another car at once. This was the second and, till now, the last occasion on which I have made money without working for it.

The world and the Director of the School of Economics were both less fit for laughter than in the period of Chapter V. But need for healing nonsense remained. Happily, the School of Economics, with so many other things, brought the chance of combining nonsense with service to charity, in the organisation of the Mock Trials described in the last section of this chapter.

### *Royal Commission on Coal Industry*

I had planned to spend August 1925 with my mother in the Royal Anchor Hotel at Liphook, getting to work seriously on my overdue history of *British Food Control*, and to visit Vienna in September for its International Summer School. In the middle of August I was summoned to London to see Mr. Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. "I expect you realise what we want with you," he said as I came into the room. He went on to say that the Government wanted me as one of four members of a Royal Commission on the Coal Industry.

The Mining Association, on behalf of the mine-owners, had given notice to end the existing wages agreement with the Miners' Federation, as from the end of July. The Federation declined the new agreement prepared by the owners and declined to give evidence to a Court of Inquiry into the facts of the dispute, which was set up under the Chairmanship of Lord Macmillan and reported on July 28. In order to avert crisis and stoppage in the mines, the Government undertook to subsidise

<sup>1</sup> The last previous solar eclipse with totality visible in the British Isles was in May 1724. The next one is due in August 1999 when, according to an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article from which these dates are taken, "the moon's shadow will graze England at Land's End." The British Isles seem to come off badly for these celestial shows, with most of the long eclipses—up to seven and a half minutes of totality—preferring the remoter oceans of the world, as atom bomb trials do. 'Totality at Settle in June 1927 lasted forty seconds only.

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the industry from August 1, 1925 to April 30, 1926, meeting from the Exchequer the difference between the proposals of the owners as to wages and the demands of the miners. Meanwhile there would be a Royal Commission instructed to report rapidly as to what should happen after April. The Commission, as Mr. Churchill explained to me, would be unlike the Sankey Commission of 1919. That had consisted, in the main, of representatives of mine-owners and miners and recognised sympathisers with one side or the other. This time there were to be only four of us, all unspotted by previous knowledge of coal-mining: Herbert Samuel as Chairman, General Sir Herbert Lawrence of Glyn Mills, Kenneth Lee of Tootals, and myself. The three others had been settled already: in the absence of the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, he was asking me.

I had no choice but to accept, though it made hay of writing books. The Commission was appointed formally on September 5 and reported almost six months to the day thereafter, on March 6, 1926.

One of the first questions we had to decide on the Commission was whether we should hold our meetings for evidence with the Press present, as the Sankey Commission had done, or without the Press, but publishing verbatim notes of the evidence thereafter. I was for the second course, briefly on the grounds that the Press could not publish more than a small selection of the evidence and that the selection would often be a bad one; that the presence of reporters would affect the minds of the witnesses, making them less candid; that the presence of reporters would embarrass the Commissioners themselves in examination. I set out my argument before we began in a letter to Samuel, which I reproduce now in the Appendix<sup>1</sup>; the argument has a general bearing on the conduct of official inquiries. But I was beaten on this issue. After a talk with the mine-owners and miners, Samuel decided for taking evidence in public.

Our proceedings in the large Committee Room off Westminster Hall became one of the free shows of London. We four Commissioners sat enthroned at the far end of the room, with our official assessors and secretaries by our sides, the witnesses below us in front, and on our flanks the opposing armies of mine-owners and miners' representatives. We looked out on generally crowded benches of spectators. The Commissioners in turn began the examination of each witness. When we were done, the representatives of the Mining Association and the Miners' Federation had their go in turn. And what I had anticipated in my letter to Samuel happened. When prominent members of the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 10.

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Mining Association and Miners' Federation were under mutual examination, the proceedings became a dog-fight.

Happily our throne in Westminster Hall was too high to be overlooked. I seldom had a pencil out of my hand, but, when examination by my fellow Commissioners was over, I was using my pencil generally, not for noting oral evidence but for doing sums about mining output or wages from written returns supplied to us. This seemed a more profitable use of time than attending to back-chat between Herbert Smith of the Miners' Federation and Evan Williams of the Mining Association, or between the Duke of Northumberland and A. J. Cook. We had no time to spare.

The six months of the Coal Commission were as strenuous a time as I have known. I wrote to Stephen Tallents near the end of it that it had been like February 1918 when we invented food rationing together. In 1926 I was eight years older and I had plenty to do apart from coal.

In the autumn of 1925, while we were mainly taking evidence, I ran into servant troubles in the larger house which, at the end of 1921, I had taken in Campden House Road, to rescue my parents in their eighties from the country; my letters of this time to my mother are mainly a record of tiresome domestics giving or calling for notice or failing to materialise. Just after the New Year, when we were beginning to draft our Report, came exciting news of a Rockefeller Grant to the School of Economics to develop the natural bases of the social sciences; this started tricky negotiations with some of the professors. The burden of seeing me through both on domestic service and at the School fell largely on J.

Between evidence and drafting, I took a week's interlude at Cannes with Uthwatt and others of the Reform Club. There, among other notabilities, I saw Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen with Lord Birkenhead and reported to my mother how much less graceful she seemed on the dance-floor than on the tennis court; I had seen her at the small Wimbledon in July 1919 win the Ladies' Championship at her first appearance there, after being within a point of losing to Mrs. Lambert Chambers. But School of Economics problems pursued me even to the Côte d'Azur. The Army officer who had been put in charge of our athletic ground had absconded just before with some of our funds, expressing hope of making good later. Walking into the Casino at Monte Carlo, I saw him there; his plan for making good became plain. I wondered if it was my duty to tell the police and decided that I must. They set a watch; he kept away for some days—no doubt having recognised me—but after that he tried his luck again and was caught.



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There followed the dreary business of extradition, during which he was held in prison in France without trial for three months; he was delivered to British justice looking a wreck. We tried to get the judge in England to take account of this in sentence, and to let him off any further imprisonment, but the judge would have none of this. This experience was enough to cure me of fondness for gambling hells, if I had had that before. And it was through gambling—on horses—that our wretch had come to grief.

Between mid-October and Christmas we took the bulk of our oral evidence on the Coal Commission, thirty-three sittings in all for seventy-six witnesses; we varied this by visiting twenty-five mines in Scotland, Lancashire, Yorkshire and South Wales; we digested a mass of statistics, including what we came to call the £3,000 return (from the cost of obtaining it) about numbers employed, output, earnings, and so forth from most of the mines in the country. All this had to be done in three months or less of 1925. With the New Year we got down to drafting. Samuel as Chairman had main responsibility for this, but some of the chapters came to me, including output, hours, wages, and royalties, while the long descriptive part at the beginning was thrown at Ernest Gowers of the Mines Department to do against time, after we had dined already to celebrate completion of the Report.

The trickiest chapter of all was on nationalisation. We had not been well impressed by the existing organisation of the industry or by the mine-owners as a body; I found myself saying harsh things about them later to Steel-Maitland as Minister of Labour. On the other hand, we thought the miners' own scheme of nationalisation unworkable—too syndicalistic. On the general principle of nationalisation we were open-minded—but we saw little gain in saying "yes" to the miners' demand and then handing them something that they would regard not as bread but as a stone. Samuel, as Chairman, produced one afternoon a first draft on nationalisation which none of us, himself I think included, liked much. I took it home and wrote to him next morning.

January 29, 1926.

I sat up last night from ten until three, and with an hour this morning completed the enclosed.

As you will see, it is a completely re-written document, though embodying parts of yours verbally and all the essential arguments (unless I missed some in the small hours) either verbally or in other words.

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It came easiest to make a fresh version in this way, and I leave it to you to do exactly what comes easiest to you with it. If you do feel able to use it a good deal, my chief pleasure will be to think that it will release some of your time for other parts of the Report. If you don't, well and good. At least you'll see what I'm after.

I hope in any case you will feel able to put in a good deal of the latter part of my version recognising the degree of justification behind the miners' proposals, though deducing from them the totally different practical conclusions of our own proposals for re-organisation.

If I get time later today to send you any ideas about Royalties, I will. Anyhow, I will now get on to output and hours.

P.S. I am not sending this version of course to anyone but you.

I am not sure today how much of what stands as Chapter VI of the Commission's Report, on Nationalisation, is Samuel's draft and how much is mine. Nor does it matter. The Report, as it appeared, represented the work of four minds not one. It showed that a Committee could produce something quickly.

Samuel I had known and worked with before. Herbert Lawrence and Kenneth Lee were new lasting friends from the Commission. As the Report began to take shape, it became clear that, if the subsidy ended on April 30, 1926, as we were sure that it should end, the miners must accept either longer hours or lower wages in the immediate future; the improvements in mining organisation which we were proposing should correct this later, but could not bear fruit at once. It seemed to most of us worth while to try to get down to brass tacks with the miners, on the choice between lower wages and longer hours as the immediate sacrifice. So Lawrence and Lee and I got Herbert Smith and A. J. Cook to dinner at Lee's flat for unrestricted conversation. Samuel thought that as Chairman he should be aloof. We thought we must by hook or by crook understand, if possible, what was in the minds of the miners' leaders, but we never got within sight or smell of an understanding. Herbert Smith's mind was granite. Cook's mind I described, after he had left that night, as having the motions of a drunken dragon-fly. "Not a minute on the day, not a penny off the pay" was the dreary rignarole.

In the end the Commission came down on the side of keeping hours unchanged and letting wages bear the burden of adjustment. We did so for two different reasons. First, any decline of wages would be put right again with returning prosperity; an addition to working hours

## SIDE-SHOWS OF A DIRECTOR

would be harder to reverse. Second, serious hardship through lower wages could largely be prevented by introduction of children's allowances. I had become one of the first converts to Eleanor Rathbone; after reviewing *The Disinherited Family*, I was in her camp ever after, and I carried my Coal Commission colleagues with me. But the miners got none of these things then. Their fate in the bad years that followed was settled not by Influence but by Power.

The Report of the Coal Commission, signed on March 6, 1926, was published on March 11 and placed on sale at 3d.—a price at which it became a best seller among Government publications. There followed, at the end of April, the short-lived General Strike and the long-drawn Miners' Strike. Herbert Samuel, returning from abroad, took a part in bringing the General Strike to an end. It had not been a success; by their eight months of subsidy to coal-mining the Government had bought time to perfect their defence against stoppages of all kinds. 'The Miners' Strike dragged on. Though our responsibility as Commissioners was at an end, we were not kept in the dark. So late as the end of August, the Minister of Labour, to whom the problem of coal stood referred, brought us into private conversation, before a talk with the miners' leaders; the Minister of Labour of that day was Arthur Steel-Maitland, who was also Chairman of the Governors of the School of Economics. He found the miners' leaders exactly as we had found them six months before. And the mine-owners were as before also.

A number of the things that our Commission recommended came eventually to pass. Twelve years after we had sat, Herbert Samuel, promoted to the Lords, used his position to get a Return from the Government of the day: "The position at present is that of the Commission's 17 recommendations, 12 have been put into effect, though not all by legislation."<sup>1</sup> But in the main my six months in the coal-hole were lost endeavour. We proved that a Royal Commission could report quickly. But even that lesson has often been forgotten.

### 3. *Introduction to Broadcasting*

My first appearance as a broadcaster came about unusually. Lord Beaverbrook on November 27, 1930, had proclaimed a crusade for Empire Free Trade. The B.B.C. offered a chance of reply to opponents, and the Liberals, or at least those who clung to the traditional Liberal

<sup>1</sup> Coal Industry Return to Order of the House of Lords, 1939 (28).

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faith, wanted a reply to be given. But they did not want any of their active Parliamentarians to undertake the task; Lord Beaverbrook was not formally associated with any political party. So I, as one equally free from political ties, was asked to give the reply and I did so on December 4. My reply lacked nothing of vigour, above all in its closing sentences:

In the time of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, before the Dominions became so protectionist, there was more scope for Preferential Empire Trade than there is today. A hundred years ago, a Free Trade Empire might have been possible. In 1930, the time for tearing up by the roots the economic life of Britain and the Dominions has gone by. The strongest reason for calling Lord Beaverbrook's campaign a Crusade is that it would have fitted much better into an earlier century than into this one. Lord Beaverbrook is just trying to put back Big Ben.

This was the first broadcast of my life. I was told at about this time that when someone suggested me to a prominent official of the B.B.C. as a speaker to be tried on the air, the answer was that I was or would be no good as a broadcaster. After this first broadcast—given almost accidentally—I found myself for some years a favourite with the B.B.C. The *Radio Times* advertised me as “one of those rare personalities who combine expert knowledge with effective microphone technique.”

Through me the B.B.C. launched in 1932 one of the most ambitious of their efforts to make radio a means of social investigation—by inviting listeners to apply for and fill a Family Form, answering under seal of personal secrecy, as in a census, a variety of questions as to their families. This proceeding became subject to vigorous attack in the Press as “snooping.” One question inviting married partners to say how they had met first was described as particularly impertinent. To which the answer was that no one was under any compulsion to apply for a form, or, if he did apply, to answer any question in it. If he chose freely to answer any question, he dismissed any charge of impertinence in it. As regards that particular question, the way in which marriages were made and families founded was not only of interest to the persons directly concerned, but changes from one generation to another might be well worth study.

I went on to become for a few years an almost regular performer on the microphone. The Chief News Editor of the B.B.C. from 1934 to 1937 was John Coatman, who for some years before had been Professor

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of Imperial Economic Relations at the School of Economics. He gave me the chance of a regular talk once a week at the star hour just after the News; many of these talks were published later in a small book. The Director of Talks from 1932 to 1935 was Charles Siepmann, who continued with the B.B.C. in other planning jobs till he went to America in 1939. With him I had, in one way and another, much discussion of broadcasting programmes and techniques.

When in 1949 I had, as Chairman of the Broadcasting Committee, to consider the future of broadcasting, I could not help looking back on my past there, and realising how natural it had become for a while, through these and through other personal connections, for me to have much say in the B.B.C. and plenty of say, if I wanted it, on what all of us wrongly call the air. I thought that my experience suggested a danger against which safeguards would be needed if broadcasting continued as a monopoly.

The production of broadcast programmes—whether talks or discussions or concerts or anything else—is a co-operation between the producer or inventor and the person who makes the actual noise on the air. Human beings who have once worked together with mutual satisfaction cannot avoid wishing to continue the alliance. To call this favouritism is too strong a word, but it does make it less easy for newcomers to break in: the discovered good becomes easily the enemy of the unknown better—in programmes and in persons. All men performing difficult public duty under pressure, whether they are Prime Ministers or B.B.C. officials, need to be saved from excessive reliance on cronies.

This was one of the purposes of the Public Representation Service, as an organ for self-criticism internal to the B.B.C. and as a channel for intelligent criticism from outside, recommended in 1950 by the Committee over which I presided. Establishment of this service was to my mind a fundamental proposal of the Committee. I am sorry that it received so little consideration, when successive Governments had or could have had our Report before them. The relevant paragraphs of the Broadcasting Committee Report are reproduced in the Appendix.<sup>1</sup>

I had my first experience of being televised at Alexandra Palace in February 1937 and found it a strenuous performance. The turn before mine was mannequins showing fashions. Mine was a discussion of unemployment with John Hilton, showing charts of the past course of unemployment and maps of its regional distribution. I produced for

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 11.

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viewers a large chart of the trade cycle from 1854 to 1936. Hilton asked me what 1937 and 1938 would show. I said he was asking me to play the old game of pinning a tail to a donkey with one's eyes shut—and I proceeded to pin a tail continuing the trade cycle curve. It might for 1937 and 1938 point upwards—to improving employment—or it might swing downwards to herald a depression, and I knocked it down to do so. I had arranged for my housekeeper to see the show at Harrods. She came back over the moon with excitement. "I saw you looking right at me once."

### 4. *Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee*

The most interesting of the side-shows that came to me between the wars was the Chairmanship of the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee established in 1934.<sup>1</sup> My several attempts to get unemployment insurance made general during the war, in order to prepare for post-war depression, had all been unsuccessful; nothing was done till too late. The first general scheme, under an Act of 1920, was caught in depression at once and never functioned as had been intended; there followed a *wurra wurra* of legislation—fifteen Acts of Parliament in six years from 1920 to 1926, putting benefit rates and benefit periods up or down, or changing the scheme in other ways. A second model of unemployment insurance, established in 1928 on the Report of a Departmental Committee, had a similar fate and foundered in the Great Depression beginning in 1929. A third model, established in 1934, after Report by a Royal Commission, embodied a revolutionary idea—of avoiding perpetual recourse to Parliament for legislation, by setting up a Statutory Committee of novel structure and powers.

The Statutory Committee consisted of a Chairman and four to six other members appointed by the Minister of Labour. All members were appointed normally for five years at a time. No member of the Committee could sit in the House of Commons or be elected to it.

The most striking of the powers of the Committee related to finance. The Committee were required to make a report to the Minister of Labour on the financial condition of the Unemployment Fund at the end of each calendar year and at any time when they thought the Fund likely to become insolvent. If, in any financial report, they estimated that the

<sup>1</sup> I wrote an account of the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee as a *Politica* Pamphlet published by the School of Economics in 1937. This has been used in preparing the account given here.

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Fund had a continuing surplus or deficiency, they were required to recommend changes of contribution or benefit rates or conditions that would dispose of the surplus or deficiency and keep the Fund in balance. The Minister of Labour, receiving such a recommendation, was not bound by it, but he was bound by the Committee's estimate of surplus or deficiency. He could propose to Parliament that a surplus should be disposed of or a deficiency made good in some other way than that recommended by the Committee, but he could not question the surplus or deficiency itself. If the Committee said that the Fund was insolvent, the Minister could not reject their opinion as unduly pessimistic and thus avoid the unpleasant necessity of either raising contributions or lowering benefits. If the Committee reported a surplus not quite large enough to allow of some improvement that the Minister was being pressed to make and wished to make, he could not put the surplus a little higher to suit his case, however popular the case might be. He had to work always to the Committee's figure, spending or saving as the case might be neither more nor less than the Committee told him. It should be added that resulting changes of contributions or benefits did not require legislation. They were made by Order, laid before Parliament, which Parliament could reject but could not amend.

In addition to this remarkable financial control, the Committee had the right and duty of reporting on all regulations proposed to be made by the Minister of Labour about unemployment insurance; his power of adjusting the scheme by regulations was wide. The Committee might be asked also by the Minister to advise on any question affecting the operation of the Unemployment Insurance Act, including questions as to its amendment. Their first task of all was of this nature—to report whether unemployment insurance should be extended to agriculture and if so on what terms; their proposals on this were substantially accepted and enacted. There followed many similar references—as to treatment of private gardeners, as to the remuneration limit for non-manual workers, as to seasonal workers, as to share fishermen and so on. The aim of all this, as a supporter put it, was to take unemployment insurance out of politics. The effect, according to Mr. Aneurin Bevan, was that, whereas hitherto laws had been made by Parliament, now in regard to unemployment insurance they were being made by Sir William Beveridge.

I had had nothing to do with the conception of the Statutory Committee, or, indeed, with unemployment insurance from 1920 to 1934, beyond giving evidence to the Royal Commission of 1930-32. When

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an invitation to be Chairman of the Statutory Committee came to me out of the blue from Oliver Stanley as Minister of Labour, I jumped at the chance. The fact that the Chairmanship carried a salary of £1,000 a year was the least of its attractions. It carried me back to my first love in social problems and to my old department, full of friends with whom I had begun in 1909.

The work proved pleasant and interesting beyond expectation. My six colleagues on the Committee—I had nothing to do with choosing them—seemed to me always admirably chosen. They included regularly two members appointed by the Minister to represent employers and employees respectively, and one member appointed after consulting the Minister of Labour in Northern Ireland. They had by statute to include one woman, but in practice we had always two, generally of slightly different political outlook. It may be that successive Ministers or their advisers held seriously the opinion which in youth I expressed frivolously—that in constituting any organ of administration, if one has any woman there at all, one should have two at least; one woman in a committee consisting otherwise of men will get her way unduly; she must have a sister to keep her in check. Whatever the reason, the result was admirable. No Committee could have had two more useful members than Mrs. Mary Stocks and Miss Katie Stephenson.

The special interest of the Committee's work lay in discussion of our problems with the outside bodies concerned. Whenever a draft regulation or a question for advice was referred to us by the Minister of Labour, we gave public notice of the reference and invited representations. Wherever this seemed worth while, we held sittings for oral evidence—always in private without reporters. When our annual financial report was on the stocks—in January and February—we had full-day sessions with the National Federation of Employers and with the Trades Union Congress and its Social Insurance Department. There I got to know and value the official head of that Department, J. L. Smyth, and the successive Chairmen of it—an admirable foundation for the discussions of social insurance that were to follow in 1942.

This annual financial report represented the most serious of the Committee's tasks and we took a strong and serious line about it—even to the extent of doing what the Minister introducing the Act had said that we would have no power to do. We insisted on regarding cyclical fluctuation of trade as one of the risks to be taken into account in considering whether or not the fund was solvent, and on building up a reserve in good years to ensure that benefits could be maintained in bad



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years and contributions stabilised. When the Bill which became the Act of 1934 was passing through Parliament, an amendment had been moved authorising the Statutory Committee to take this line and to build up in good years a reserve for bad years, but the amendment had been opposed and defeated by the Government on the ground that the reserve required might be incalculably great. Fortunately, in Britain, what a Minister says in discussing a Bill does not affect the law, after the Bill has become an Act. When we began our work as Committee, unemployment for inter-war years was relatively low, with the trade cycle near its crest. The current income of the Fund was much in excess of its expenditure, but we refused to see a surplus in the Fund till we should have built up a reserve against the higher unemployment which all experience taught us to expect and which began to come in 1939. But World War II made our prescience unnecessary.

In my ten years as Chairman, only one definite recommendation of the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee failed of acceptance. To this extent it was true that the laws and regulations of unemployment insurance were made by Sir William Beveridge and his Committee. But such a comment ignores the essential nature of our work, in ensuring consultation beforehand with the persons concerned. In regard to regulations our existence gave to those likely to be affected by the regulations an opportunity of expressing views beforehand to an independent body; our reports on draft regulations always went to Parliament and always described the representations made to us. In advising on problems referred to us by the Minister, we were in effect a standing Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance, with unusual speed of action. We sat in private without the Press and we did not indulge in getting evidence taken down in shorthand or printed. Our report on the largest problem referred to us—application of unemployment insurance to agriculture—took three months only to make, and led to immediate legislation.

I remained Chairman of the Statutory Committee from 1934 to 1944. Then resignation of this post and its salary became part of the price to me of becoming a politician. In the post-war reconstruction of social insurance the Statutory Committee disappeared and its moral seems to have been forgotten. In a world of regulations and controls it seems increasingly worth while to give to those subject to control a chance of expressing their views neither to a preoccupied Minister nor to a permanent official, but to a body of just men with time and independence and the right of making their judgments known.

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### 5. *Economists, Politicians and Ancient Greeks on Trial*

For a number of years we placed the Great Hall of the School of Economics at the disposal of the King Edward's Hospital Fund authorities for money-raising entertainments of many kinds—with the entertainment provided free by well-known characters in frivolous dispute. A number of these affairs took the form of Mock Trials. For one of these trials in each of the years 1933, 1934, 1935, I took responsibility and wrote the script. After Economists had been tried on the charge of Conspiring to Create Mental Fog and Confusion, Politicians were charged with Keeping their Ears too Close to the Ground, finally, the ancient Greeks were charged with Not Knowing that They are Dead. The audience were treated as the jury.

In the first of these three trials Walter Elliot was judge, and Robert Boothby as prosecutor brought a string of fellow M.P.s, including John Wallace and Anthony Muirhead, to show the chaos into which their minds had been thrown by the pronouncements of economists—in particular a large and dangerous gang living at Cambridge under the name of J. M. Keynes. "They are distinguished alike by the ferocity and inconsistency of their beliefs and the brilliancy of their language." I was naturally one of the economists on trial—with Hubert Henderson, Theodore Gregory and Arthur Salter. I began by pleading "guilty," rejecting a suggestion that I should plead "guilty but insane." In the end I had to defend myself like the rest, and closed my defence by producing a string of students from the School of Economics to prove in song that their minds were free from fog and as clear as empty space:

Though I listen to lectures from morning to night  
My mind remains perfectly clear  
Of theories wrong and theories right  
Of medians and weights  
And the Function of States  
Of the law of sea-carriage  
And Trobriand marriage  
Of returns that decrease  
And trade routes to Greece—  
And just when and how democracy died.  
Yes—my mind remains perfectly clear  
For whatever I hear  
Comes in at this ear (*touching left ear*)  
And goes out (*touching right ear*) on the opposite side.

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### *Chorus*

Oh we listen to lectures from morning to night  
But our minds are all perfectly clear  
For whatever we hear  
Comes in at one ear  
—On the left—and goes out on the right.

In the return match a year later against the Politicians I acted as prosecutor, with Theobald Mathew as judge, and a star team of M.P.s as defendants—Lady Astor, Robert Boothby, Gwilym Lloyd George, James Maxton and John Wallace. The full indictment, as read by Scaborne Davies as Clerk of the Court, charged the defendants with “practising unnatural and diabolic arts, whereby you have contrived to keep your ears at all times close to the ground, while at the same and all other times having your heads in the air, your feet in the grave, and your hands in the pockets of the people, whether common, uncommon, chosen, best, bright young, or peculiar.”

My speech as prosecutor contained three serious sentences, one declaring “that the last thing that any normal being wants is to spend much of his time in governing either himself or anyone else,” and another comparing the average politician to “a general marching at the head of his army face-backwards, so that he can be sure of seeing their faces and knowing what they are thinking all the time.” Finally:

What the ordinary citizen wants is to choose his politician as he would choose his doctor—with liberty to change from time to time—and leave it to the politician to go ahead and do his best, for the country as a whole and not for the noisiest crowd, using his own brains and those of the civil servants.

Democracy is best and safest if stripped to bare minimum of electing a dictator every five years. Once we have gone to the poll, let us be done with politics for five years—all who have anything else to do. The alternative is government by busy-bodies—chivying our doctor.

With the star team of defendants, it is needless to say that they scintillated. As they could do so and did so without preparation, little of their nonsense is recorded. But as performers they were equalled by one of the School porters, Joseph Hurd, whom I put up as joint witness for the prosecution with Gwilym Lloyd George who had turned King’s

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Evidence. Joseph Hurd had a wall face giving solemnity to every utterance. The brief on which I examined him ran as follows:

Q. As a typical British citizen, you value the essential British liberties?

A. (Striking an attitude): I would die for them!

Q. What are the essential British liberties?

A. I am not quite sure, Sir, but perhaps one of the Professors could tell you.

Q. The newspapers might tell you. What are your favourite political newspapers?

A. *The Times* on Sundays and the *Observer* on weekdays.

Q. Do you go often to political meetings?

A. Never. Only to race meetings.

Q. Do you take any interest in any political question?

A. None.

Q. Do you vote?

A. I vote when I am taken to the poll.

Q. On what grounds do you vote?

A. I'm not sure, but perhaps one of the Professors could tell you.

Q. What do you want politicians to do?

A. Leave me alone.

Q. Do you like them to kiss your babies?

A. I object strongly.

Q. Do you agree that all politicians should be made to learn economics?

A. I think it would serve them right.

There followed a cross-examination by the defendant Boothby in which the witness admitted that his objection to politicians kissing his babies was theoretical, since he had no babies, and a re-examination by myself:

Q. You have just told the defendant Boothby that you have no babies?

A. That is so, Sir.

Q. Now, I want you to be very careful how you answer this question. Were you ever a baby yourself?

A. So I have heard, Sir.

Q. Now, Mr. Hurd, please look carefully at all the defendants and throw your mind back as far as you can. When you were a baby, would you have liked any one of the defendants to come and kiss you?

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A. Well, Sir, I'd like very much to say what I know you want me to say, but Lady Astor is a very nice lady.

This brought down the house. I ended my prosecution by bringing on the stage a chorus of ten School of Economics students as the Politicians of the Future to declare their political aspirations and how they prepared themselves for these.

The girl student who planned to be "Next Liberal Prime Minister" said she prepared herself for this by studying Beveridge on Unemployment and received the judge's approval: "A very proper plan. The occupation seems to be one insured for unemployment." Her rival, who meant to be first Dictator of Britain, did "dictation in the morning and in the afternoon read the life of Sir John Reith." The young man who foresaw himself as "Perpetual President of the Disarmament Conference" saw also that he would have time on his hands: "I play patience, while the others play beggar my neighbour."

And so on, and so on. The party trooped off singing the last verse of the School song:

With clean hands and clean faces  
We go to our places  
And always we study whatever we're told  
For learning is better, far better than gold.

"Look on this picture and on that—the defendants"—I adjured the audience as jury. How the judge summed up and the jury pronounced, I have forgotten.

In the last of the Mock Trials with which I was concerned I appeared as prosecutor of the Ancient Greeks on the charge of Not Knowing that They are Dead. J. A. Spender came as judge and T. R. Glover, then Public Orator at Cambridge, and Cyril Norwood, recently become President of St. John's College, Oxford, appeared as defendants. As I explained in my opening as prosecutor, no actual Ancient Greeks were present to be tried; the two defendants were being charged as accessories for concealment of death. I compared them to the resurrection-men—Burke and Hare.

In this trial, the nonsense overlay a serious difference of opinion. I had addressed the Headmasters' Conference in December 1932, on the London School of Economics as a School of Humanities, and as the School taught neither Latin nor Ancient Greek I had said things reflecting on the special value of those studies for general education. Soon after this, Glover had given an eloquent and effective broadcast on "The

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Challenge of the Greek" and I had controverted with him. I was delighted to find him ready to transfer our argument to the comic stage, at the School of Economics.

Cyril Norwood, joined with him as co-defendant, had the excellent idea of appearing as representative of Sparta rather than of Athens; he justified Spartan education as built on the three F's—Fagging, Flogging and Fighting—and as prototype both of the English Public School and of the Boy Scout Movement. He proceeded to cross-examine me on the assumption that the only alternative to education by Greek was in some of the wilder aberrations of American Universities. From my travels in the United States I had supplied him with a variety of actual thesis subjects from America, to use against me:

The University of Chicago. "A Time and Motion comparison on four methods of dish-washing. A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts."

For the M.D. of the University of Columbia. "Administration of High School Cafeteria."

For a University and Degree unnamed a study of "The Intelligence of Orphan Children in Texas."

On the last of these I answered that it seemed a very extensive study; judging by the films, nearly all children in Texas were orphans.

I produced among my witnesses a modern Greek student of the School, by name Demosthenes Mangakis, who said he had first heard about Ancient Greeks when he came to England to get a classical education. He could understand me when I spoke Ancient Greek, because he had learned this in an English school. But his great namesake would not have understood a word of either of us, speaking Greek as I did.

For pure nonsense I paraded once more our School porter Joseph Hurd, to whom I recited in conclusion the famous chorus from *Oedipus at Colonus* (one of the things that I carry about with me from my nine years spent on Classics):

εὐίππου, ξένε, τᾶσδε χώρας  
ἵκου τὰ κράτιστα γᾶς ἔπαυλα,  
τὸν ἀργῆτα Κολωνόν, ἐνθ'  
ἡ λίγεια μινύρεται  
θαμίζουσα μάλιστ' ἀηδὼν  
χλωραῖς ὑπὸ βύσσαις,  
τὸν οἰνωπὸν ἔχουσα κισσύν.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles, lines 668-74. See Appendix A, Section 12, for translation.

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I asked him how he liked that:

*Hurd.* Sorry, Sir, I don't understand French.

*B.* That's not French. That's a bit of his own that the poet Sophocles recited when he was on trial for madness, to prove that he was sane.

*Hurd.* What did they do to him, Sir?

*B.* They acquitted him.

*Hurd.* I think they made a bad mistake.

Of course the defendants were found guilty, so that they might be condemned to drink hemlock and die. Of course, also, when the stretcher-bearers went to carry the corpses away the corpses rose up and walked off amid cheers.

## Chapter XI

### FADING OF DREAMS

Between 1934 and 1938 the world received an impressive demonstration of the unwillingness of the British and French Democracies to fight on an uneasy conscience or to look ahead.

*Peace by Federation*, p. 6 (Federal Union Pamphlet, 1940).

IN the nineteen-thirties one dream after another that had amused mankind since fighting ended in 1918 faded and vanished. The peace of 1919 had been ushered in by the leaders of the victorious nations with outspoken expectations of a better world for all; in 1930 came the Great Depression, with its unparalleled unemployment for all nations or nearly all. World War I had brought two autocracies—in Germany and Russia—crashing to the ground; in 1933 came the establishment of Hitler's tyranny over Germany; the dream of ever-widening justice and liberty was at an end. In 1936 rearming of Hitler's Germany was marked by occupation of the Rhineland, while just before the weakness of the League of Nations had been exposed by Hitler's jackal Mussolini in Abyssinia; the dream of settled peace was at an end. In the same years I came to realise that the hope with which I had come to the School of Economics—the hope of bringing economics nearer in character and method to the natural sciences—was as far from realisation as it had ever been. My dream of economics as an inductive science might prove to be no more than a dream.

#### 1. *The Dream of Ever-widening Justice and Liberty Fades*

In March 1933 I was in Vienna, on business connected with the International History of Prices and Wages. Lionel Robbins, one of my colleagues at the School of Economics, was also in Vienna at the time, meeting fellow-economists of the Austrian School. He and his wife and Ludwig von Mises and I, sitting one evening in one of the Vienna cafés, were talking of things in general, when an evening paper was brought in, with an announcement that a dozen leading professors of all faculties were being dismissed from posts in German Universities by the newly established Nazi regime, either on racial or on political grounds. As Mises read out the names to us our wonder grew, and with it grew



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indignation. Robbins and I decided that, as soon as we got back to London, we should take action in the School of Economics to help teachers and scientists in our subjects who should come under persecution.

I remember the journey back from Vienna for two incidents. One was that I stopped at Frankfurt for a night, and having an hour to spare in the evening, I spent it in the cinema. There on the screen I had, for the first and last time, sight and hearing of Goebbels in action; he looked and sounded to me like an ape possessed by a devil. The other incident was that on the way to Frankfurt there travelled with me a German professor slightly known to me, not one of those already listed for dismissal but one who might be on a new list. He was in a state of panic all the way because in the next compartment was a youth, little more than a boy, whom he took for a Nazi agent, detailed to keep watch on him and hand him to the police. My friend's fears may have been imaginary, but his panic was real, and mind- and spirit-destroying. I had early intimation of what terror may mean when justice has become the will of a sadistic tyrant.

Robbins and I, on return to London, made to the Professorial Council of the School of Economics our proposal for aid to displaced academics. We met a ready response. The Council, in May 1933, resolved to establish an Academic Freedom Fund, for the assistance of displaced academics in any of the fields of study covered by the School, and to invite members of the staff to contribute from their salaries to this fund. A large proportion of the staff contributed.

The field of studies covered by the School, from economics and politics through sociology and anthropology to law and history, was likely to produce, in relation to the number of teachers engaged in them, an exceptionally large proportion of dismissals, on other than racial grounds; Nazi doctrine excluded independence of thought in any of these subjects. The total number of teachers in these studies was much less than in natural science and in the arts. These larger faculties were likely to yield the bulk of the dismissals. There would be need for action by Universities generally.

I chanced to be due to spend a week-end in May at Cambridge with George and Janet Trevelyan. I devoted the week-end to talking and writing about displaced German academics. I found, of course, that others in Cambridge—notably Lord Rutherford, Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, and my host George Trevelyan—were deeply concerned. I prepared a draft statement for the Press announcing the formation of an

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Academic Assistance Council, and appealing for support; collected suggestions of persons to be invited to sign the statement; and cast round for a Chairman or President. The ideal person for this was Lord Rutherford, but my first approach to him on the Sunday morning had discouraging results. While sympathetic to our aim he said that he could not take on anything fresh; Lady Rutherford as nearly as might be vetoed his accepting my proposal; the utmost I could secure, on my first interview, was postponement of his saying "No." Fortunately J. also was in Cambridge at this time, staying with other friends. Through friendship between her daughter Lucy Mair and Lord Rutherford's daughter, Eileen, she knew him well. The two of us went back to him on Sunday afternoon. He had been thinking over the matter and realising what the Nazi policy meant; he exploded with indignation at their dismissals of individuals well known to him. We urged on him that all we needed from him was his name and influence as President and to sign our appeal. In the end, with Lady Rutherford doubtfully permitting, he agreed to act.

The statement announcing the Academic Assistance Council, with forty-one signatures of men of distinction in every branch of science and the arts who became its first members, appeared in the papers on May 24, 1933.

. . . . We shall seek to raise a fund, to be used primarily, though not exclusively, in providing maintenance for displaced teachers and investigators, and finding them the chance of work in Universities and scientific institutions.

We shall place ourselves in communication both with Universities in this country and with organisations which are being formed for similar purposes in other countries, and we shall seek to provide a clearing house and centre of information for those who can take any kind of action directed to the same end. We welcome offers of co-operation from all quarters. We appeal for generous help from all who are concerned for academic freedom and the security of learning. We ask for means to prevent the waste of exceptional abilities exceptionally trained.

The issue raised at the moment is not a Jewish one alone; many who have suffered or are threatened have no Jewish connection. The issue, though raised acutely at the moment in Germany, is not confined to that country. We should like to regard any funds entrusted to us as available for University teachers and investigators of

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whatever country who, on grounds of religion, political opinion or race, are unable to carry on their work in their own country.

Our action implies no unfriendly feelings to the people of any country; it implies no judgment on forms of government or on any political issue between countries. Our only aims are the relief of suffering and the defence of learning and science.

The Academic Assistance Council, born in May 1933 and holding its first meeting in the rooms of the Royal Society on June 1, continues today as the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning. I acted at the beginning as one of its honorary secretaries and was busy on it at first. But, in addition to my full job at the School of Economics, other tasks came my way. The detailed work of the Council, from the beginning, was done by others—in particular by Professor C. S. Gibson as working honorary secretary, by Sir Frederick Kenyon and Professor A. V. Hill, and by Walter Adams, a young teacher whom we lured from his academic security, to take the same pay, as our General Secretary, for working harder with no prospects.

The Academic Assistance Council was one only of many organisations which arose in many countries to defend liberty of thought and teaching and study, in face of the Nazi challenge. A full account of these varied movements, and what they accomplished and could not accomplish, deserves to be written and will, I hope, be written elsewhere. Here I must be content with recording two general results of this experience.

First, it showed science and learning as truly international. I remember being impressed particularly by my colleagues of the natural sciences. Not only were they ready to give an indefinite amount of their time to the task of considering cases for assistance, but they began by knowing all about the work and worth of their fellow scientists in all countries.

Second, no one who had this experience could remain under illusion as to the nature of the Nazi regime or wish to have any truck with it. The University of Heidelberg decided in 1936 to celebrate the 550th anniversary of its foundation and invited attendance of delegates from British, as from other Universities and learned societies. All through February 1936 vigorous discussion raged in the letter columns of *The Times* as to whether or not such invitations should be accepted. The Bishop of Durham began with a letter against participation. Josiah Stamp (later to be Lord Stamp) took the opposite view: we ought to keep

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communications open in the world of thought. General Sir Ian Hamilton urged that we should go and see with our own eyes how things were in Germany. He cited the ceremonial mutual return of captured war trophies—the colours of a Highland regiment and the *Emden's* bell—as having done infinite service in making friendship. I put the contrary view in a letter to *The Times* of February 22, 1936. What could we learn by personal visits that we did not know already? “The facts of persecution in Germany are naked and undisguised.” I recognised the dilemma in which Nazi persecution of academics put us:

How can we avoid breaking off communications in the world of learning and at the same time avoid any appearance of condoning inexcusable actions?

I seized the opportunity, as I wrote to an Academic Assistance Council friend at the time, to advertise the Council.

By remedial action we escape the need of making useless protests. . . . We desire to neglect no opportunity of scientific collaboration with individuals in Germany and we wish our own Universities to remain as hospitable as ever to German students. But we should feel insincere in visiting on terms of friendship the German Universities which, willingly or unwillingly, have driven into exile or privation so many of our academic colleagues and, willingly or unwillingly, have departed so far from spiritual freedom.

In the end the British Universities generally held aloof from Heidelberg, as well they might. Why should a 550th anniversary be celebrated anyhow, except for propaganda?

It is easier to depose or kill an autocrat than to establish liberty. This became clear during the nineteen-thirties, not in Germany alone, but further east. About Soviet Russia I came to parting of opinion, though not of friendship, with the Webbs. To Beatrice, once expressing to me the delight of discovering new truth about Marx even in old age, I had to confess myself conservative; I preferred the old Webb view of Marxism to the new one. I reviewed *Soviet Communism* at length and diplomatically in the *Political Quarterly* :

The Webbs, I think, have made out the case for their title *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* but not for leaving off the question mark at the end of it.

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On a review by Beatrice Webb of Mr. G. M. Chamberlin's account of *Russia's Iron Age* I had come already into open controversy with the Webbs:

May I add one word of probably unwanted advice to all who sincerely desire to establish a socialist economic system in this country? This is that they should, having read Mr. Chamberlin's book and particularly the chapters on "Government by Propaganda," "Government by Terror" and "Old Russia in New Masks," in their own interests make their case for Socialism on its merits and resolutely turn their backs on Russia. The example of Russia will not help them.<sup>1</sup>

In the first years of Hitler the Soviet Government admitted some of the academic refugees from Germany to work in Russian Universities. In 1937 in a wave of xenophobia they were turned out again. The Academic Assistance Council had to make desperate efforts to save these men from being returned to Germany—to certain death or torture.

In the second edition of their Soviet work the Webbs removed the final question mark of their title. Today the world knows that there should stand there, not a single question mark, but several. The title should be nearly all question marks: *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?????*

### 2. *The Dream of Settled Peace Fades*

In March 1936 I was in Majorca, spending a short holiday by invitation of the Webbs where they were staying with a sister of Beatrice's, Mrs. Dobbs, who lived there. On March 7 came news that, in defiance of the dictated Treaty of Versailles and the free Treaty of Locarno alike, Hitler had reoccupied the Rhineland with his troops. I remember thinking that probably this move into the Rhineland would mean war; it appeared to call for an immediate show-down with Hitler. I abandoned an idea that I had had of travelling back by way of San Remo to see my old friend Rose Dunn-Gardner and came home at once.

Hitler's action did not lead to a show-down. It led to a long questionnaire addressed to him by Britain and France which he treated with studied disrespect, and it led to the appointment of Sir Thomas Inskip rather than Mr. Churchill as Minister for Co-ordination of

<sup>1</sup> Letter of March 12, 1935, to the *New Statesman and Nation*.

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Defence.<sup>1</sup> One of the early actions of the new Minister was to set up a Sub-Committee on Food Rationing in the event of war and to ask me in May 1936 to become its Chairman. With the consent of Stamp as Chairman of Governors of the School of Economics, I agreed.

The Sub-Committee, apart from myself, consisted of civil servants representing the departments assumed to be concerned, and its terms of reference were narrow. It was "to consider and report what arrangements may become necessary for rationing the supply to the individual consumer of foodstuffs and what preparatory steps should be taken forthwith in order to enable these arrangements to be brought into force as quickly as possible." Stamp and I treated the setting up of the Sub-Committee as secret and said nothing about it to any other Governors or to the teachers of the School. Somewhat oddly, when the Minister decided to make public the existence of the Sub-Committee, in the first Commons debate on his department on May 21, he described its work in terms much wider than the actual reference: the Sub-Committee was "to make the necessary arrangements for the food supply of the civilian population in time of war." "All those," he added, "who remember the circumstances of the Great War will realise how competent a chairman Sir William Beveridge will be to give guidance upon this question."

So presented, the Rationing Sub-Committee became headline news. It was the first intimation to the public that possibility of a new war must be taken seriously; I was announced as new "Food Chief Appointed." As I wrote to Stamp the day after the debate: "I am having to spend a good deal of time explaining that I am not Food Controller or anything like it." Among others I had to explain this to the Governors of the School; from the Parliamentary and Press announcements it was natural for them to assume that I had taken a new full-time job without notice to them.

On its limited reference, the Sub-Committee got through its work quickly. The Report was written before the end of September, signed on October 5, and presented on October 6. With that the work of the Sub-Committee ended. I had attached, however, to the Report signed by all the members an Annex signed only by myself, pointing out how limited was the work of the Rationing Sub-Committee. It was of little use, I said, to have machinery of registration and coupons for rationing food, unless there was food to be rationed, and if food was in short supply

<sup>1</sup> See *The Second World War*, Vol. I, pp. 156-7: "Apparently according to Mr. Feiling the German entry into the Rhineland was decisive against my appointment. It was certainly obvious that Hitler would not like it." So Mr. Churchill sums up the affair.

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there must be regulation of prices. Rationing was embedded in the larger problem of Food Control; Food Control, in turn, was embedded in larger problems of Civilian Mobilisation and Defence. From the spring-board of Rationing Machinery I leapt forward to embrace Registration for National Service; General Economic Policy in relation to wages and profits, i.e. the terms on which all men should render service in war; and Relief and/or Evacuation of London and other danger areas. From this I ranged onwards into a still larger field. "The circumstances of a future war are likely to emphasise the lesson of the last that war is now 'of nations and not of armies.' . . . To think out in advance and *as a whole* the civilian side of the next war is as important as to design measures of military attack and defence." So my Annex ended.

This Annex to my Report of October 5 was intended to suggest that someone ought to look beyond rationing machinery into the larger civilian problems. I was not surprised when, a fortnight later, the Minister and Sir Maurice Hankey invited me to be that someone—to leave the School of Economics and undertake food supply and distribution as a whole "on terms satisfactory to myself and to the Treasury." The subsequent proceedings surprised me greatly.

Stamp had agreed with me that the task now presented was a national service of first importance and should be accepted; I said to Inskip that my idea of satisfactory terms was that I should neither gain nor lose by leaving the School to go back to Government service; since the Government could offer me work only for, say, three years as compared with a prospect going on for at least eight years at the School, this meant making some special arrangement about pension. I suggested that the simplest way of doing this would be for the Government to give me back the ten years of pensionable service which I had done already in the Board of Trade—that is to say, should allow me to count for pension the ten years which I had spent as a civil servant from 1910 to 1919. Hankey and I worked out terms of reference and financial terms, and these, including return of my lost years for pension, received, according to Hankey, the cordial approval of the Minister. But the Minister had not reckoned with his Treasury. The Treasury said they could not think of giving back ten years of service for pension, though they never explained this limitation on their mental processes; they were clear, however, that they could meet me only by way of salary. So with the help of one of their officials I worked out what they would have to pay me as salary for the three years' appointment proposed, in order to enable me, after paying income and sur-tax, to lay by for my old age an equivalent to what I

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should lose by leaving the School. When the Treasury saw this figure they said, as I expected, that the figure was impossibly high and, by direction of Sir Warren Fisher, they offered me half. As this meant to me a capital loss which I reckoned at anything from £7,000 to £14,000 I replied at once declining this offer. Silence fell on the Treasury and for days I found myself unable to make any contact either with Inskip or with Hankey. My next communication was a letter from the Treasury a fortnight later saying that, after very careful consideration, it had been decided not to proceed with the plan previously contemplated, that Mr. French, of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, had been seconded to take charge of the work in the Board of Trade, and that they would be glad to make an arrangement for me to act in an advisory capacity without interfering with my work at the School. In this way, without notice to me or discussion, or chance of discussion, the invitation formally made to me by the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence was withdrawn by a letter from a Treasury official.

At the time I was a good deal annoyed—justly I think—both at what the Government did and at the way in which they did it. I wondered whether the issue was worth getting one of my friends to raise in the House of Commons. But the time was not one for airing personal quarrels. And the first object, at least, of my Annex on Wider Aspects of Food Control had been accomplished. The Treasury, to make certain of keeping me out, had to put someone else in. A Food Defence Plans Department was established in November 1936 and went to work. In recording the smooth success of Food Control during World War II, not enough notice has been taken of the fact that it was one of the few pieces of civilian mobilisation for war with three years of preparation before war began.

Writing later of this period of "The Gathering Storm," Mr. Churchill thanks Providence for having disappointed him in the spring of 1936 of the post of Minister for Co-ordination of Defence which he was prepared to take. As a Minister he would have been involved in all the Cabinet compromises and shortcomings of the next three years. "This was not the first time—or indeed the last—that I have received a blessing in what was at the time a very effective disguise."<sup>1</sup>

In my humbler sphere, in the autumn of 1936, Providence, if one may, without disrespect to him, so describe the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury and Head of the Civil Service, was even kinder to me, with a blessing in disguise. I look back with thankfulness to the rather hasty

<sup>1</sup> *The Second World War*, Vol. I, p. 157.



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reply in which I declined Warren Fisher's offer of half and so gave him the chance to spoke my wheel. I could not have bettered what was done by Henry French and his colleagues in Food Control, though I did now and again give advice or make comments when consulted by them. My personal interest in the affair was not in the familiar field of Food Control, so much as in the uncharted seas of civilian mobilisation. I had hoped, once I was inside the Government thinking machine, to become, by hook or by crook, an Economic General Staff for planning the civilian side of war. But without a Minister of calibre to back me there was never a chance of that. In the strongly sectional structure of our administration any central planning organ encounters departmental jealousies; a Minister for Co-ordination of Defence who could be prevented by the Treasury from getting the man he wanted on the terms that he had approved personally would have lost every departmental battle. By joining him I should have gone up a cul-de-sac. I should have surrendered the right of public utterance, without getting influence to mould effectively the secret counsels of the Government.

Providence was with me also in a most practical manner, in guiding me to attach importance to provision for my old age. Providence could foresee, as in 1936 I could not foresee, the prospective levels of prices and taxation after World War II. The superannuation savings of my last years of University service have proved indispensable to me.

In the volume of official History of the Second World War concerned with *Food: The Growth of Policy*, Mr. R. J. Hammond records the invitation to me in 1936 to prepare plans for food control and my immediate disappearance from this field, but since, apparently, he had no access to the relevant Treasury papers, he cannot explain my disappearance except on surmise. My account of some of the dealings appears for the first time. But, though the project of using me broke down formally on a question of pension rights, Mr. Hammond's surmise gives the substantive explanation rightly, that I would have been an uncomfortable bedfellow to the existing departments: "Sir William's ideas about the scope and authority of the task were altogether too ambitious for the Government." Mr. Hammond, attaching importance to my Annex of October 1936, prints it as Appendix A to his volume. There I saw it again in 1951 for the first time after fifteen years. I had returned all the papers of the Rationing Sub-Committee, including my Annex, to the care of the Government to whom they belonged. But while the Sub-Committee was at work I had written on July 8, 1936, a memorandum of "Notes on Food Supply in Time of War," which, while covering

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some of the same ground as the official Annex of October, are in some respects different. I have printed these Notes in the Appendix to this volume.<sup>1</sup> They seem worth recalling now for three reasons.

First, the Notes may be compared with the Memorandum on the need for a Ministry of Supply which at the same moment Mr. Churchill was submitting to the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, and which is printed by him as Appendix C in Volume I of *The Second World War*. Mr. Churchill's Memorandum is dated June 6, 1936, but no effective action was taken on it till the spring of 1939, nearly three years later. My Notes of July 8, 1936, followed by the Annex of October, had better luck; on one of their objectives there was action at once.

Second, my Notes throw an odd light on the thinking of 1936. I had been shocked by the flabbiness of our Government on the occupation of the Rhineland; there seemed to be nothing that they would not swallow from Hitler. As a civil servant in prospect I contemplated, without either criticism or approval, the possibility of a foreign policy which would enable us to "dodge the first war" that I forecast as probable within three years. As a good civil servant I went on to point out that this policy might mean facing a second war without allies; it would be vital, accordingly, to use our respite to become as little vulnerable as possible. As an ordinary Briton I was determined to go every desperate length—even to evacuation of London—before I would think of defeat. My official Notes of July 1936 breathe the spirit which Mr. Churchill clothed in immortal words on June 4, 1940, after evacuation of Dunkirk.

Third, in describing one of the main factors of our vulnerability—the inordinate growth of London—my Notes illustrate, from a fresh aspect, that paralysis of our statesmanship between the wars which is the main theme of Mr. Churchill in his larger field. Britain has survived World War II in spite of London. But if the Battle of Britain had gone the other way, if even without invasion the Luftwaffe had been able to do to London and our other towns from 1941 to 1943 what we did to Hamburg, Cologne and the Ruhr in 1944 and 1945, could we have survived to take this revenge?

I said good-bye to Thomas Inskip and Maurice Hankey at the beginning of December 1936, though not to Henry French and my friends of the Food Defence Plans Department. I used my recovered freedom to write for *The Times* three turnover articles on "The Home Front in War." I took up again the personal problem of how to exchange administration for the chance of economic study and writing, in search of which I

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 13.

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had left the Civil Service for the School of Economics seventeen years before.

The *Times* articles on the Home Front began as a long memorandum written at Christmas 1936, which I sent to Geoffrey Dawson about the middle of January. He answered that my material was worth two or three articles in *The Times* but that the "presentation of the material should be quite different" and not so alarmist. He realised that I might not wish to make the changes he desired and might prefer to publish elsewhere. But I was ready to take his advice on presentation, as I had taken Gregory Foster's advice on the form of my memorandum about Bloomsbury ten years before: "This is not the time for author's vanities but only for seeing what is the most effective way of bringing about a shift of Government interest and public opinion which appears to be necessary for adequate defence." So, after lengthy discussions with Dawson and Barrington-Ward, my memorandum was recast and appeared as three articles on February 22, 23 and 24, 1937. The theme of the articles was set in two quotations in the opening paragraphs:

In the view of some authorities, events on the home front in the last War were not merely important but decisive. On March 16, 1921, *The Times* said of Lord Rhondda in a leading article that he "was there to carry out a duty on the proper execution of which the safety of the country depended, even more than on the triumph of its naval and military forces." And Mr. Lloyd George in his *War Memoirs* (Vol. 6, page 3408) writes:

Governments have the entire responsibility for the home front. That front is always underrated by Generals in the field. And yet that is where the Great War was won and lost. The Russian, Bulgarian, Austrian, and German home fronts fell to pieces before their armies collapsed. The averting of that great and irrevocable catastrophe is the concern of the Government. Great care must be taken of the condition and susceptibilities of the population at home, who make it possible to maintain, to reinforce, and to equip armies. All the suffering is not in the trenches. The most poignant suffering is not on the battlefield, but in the bereft hearths and hearts in the homeland. If in addition to the anguish of grief women have to witness the pinched faces and waning strength of their children there will soon be trouble in the nation behind the line, and if men home on leave have to carry back these unnerving memories to the trenches their will to fight on is enfeebled.

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This is probably an exaggeration as to the War of 1914-18. If we should be driven into a new war, it may be no more than the truth. For four reasons the home front seems destined to be more important in a new war than it was in the last War.

1. In a new war the civilian population may be subject to direct attack from aircraft, to an extent unparalleled in the past, and the issue of the conflict may turn on the extent to which this direct attack on homes can be foiled, not merely by military defence, but by fighting fire and gas or by evacuation to places of greater safety.
2. The former indirect attack on the civilian population through the food supply may take a new form; food and its transport will be targets not merely on their way to Britain but in Britain.
3. Fighting itself will be more mechanised and technical; for every the soldier, sailor, and airman at the war front there will be more men from and women than before at the home front in factories.
- cri' 4. A direct attack on the home front may come early, with no need  
c for preliminary breaking of the military front; according to some  
th authorities it is against the home front that the knock-out blow of the first days and weeks is likely to be directed.

The articles brought me many appreciative letters and they formed a main topic in a House of Commons debate soon after. But I am not sure now that Geoffrey Dawson's advice on presentation had been as good as Gregory Foster's ten years before. Two Whitehall friends assured me that the articles as published were too restrained; they should have been more alarmist. As it was, the Government rode off the debate, making out that all that needed doing was being done.

I wonder sometimes if things would have been different if I had succeeded in interesting Mr. Churchill then in my theme of the Home Front. That was my first idea, before I tried Geoffrey Dawson with my memorandum. I wrote asking to see Mr. Churchill: "I should like to hear you make the kind of speech again which you made about Food Control in November 1916."<sup>1</sup> But he did not reply at once, and by the time that I did see him, my articles were in print, and I could hardly invite him to sing my song. I tried, instead, to interest him in the academic refugees and in making the Good Cause Appeal which the B.B.C. had allowed us for the Academic Assistance Council; but in the end I had to make that Appeal myself. In a letter to my friend Rose Dunn-

<sup>1</sup> Described by me in *British Food Control*, pp. 26-8.

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Gardner lying desperately ill in Mentone at the end of February, I consoled myself for failure to enlist Mr. Churchill in my campaign for the Home Front, by describing him as "blown on since the abdication."

### 3. *My Dream of Economics as a Science Fades*

I had left the Civil Service for the School of Economics in hope of leisure for economic study and writing. Underlying this hope for myself, was a major ambition for economics as a branch of human knowledge. I wished to see economics, with the other social sciences, established as an inductive science of observation, nearer to biology than to mathematics or philosophy. In speaking of "Economics as a Liberal Education" at the opening of my second session in 1920, I had based myself on Huxley's Address of 1854 at Mason College, Birmingham, on "The Educational Value of the Natural History Sciences." From biology Huxley had looked forward to a still more complex and less perfect branch of knowledge dealing with the relations of living beings to one another but using the same methods of observation, experiment, induction to general propositions, and verification by fresh observations. This would be

the science which *observes* men—whose *experiments* are made by nations upon one another, in battlefields—whose *general propositions* are embodied in history, morality and religion—whose *deductions* lead to our happiness or our misery—and whose *verifications* so often come too late, and serve only

"To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

I mean the science of Society or Sociology.

"It is striking," I commented in 1920, "that nearly seventy years ago Huxley should be making so eloquent a plea for a School of Economics." Nine years later I had come to feel that the remaking of the School of Economics and the making of Social Science anew—my major ambition—were mutually inconsistent tasks. The first did not leave time for the second.

When Allyn Young died in the spring of 1929—just after my mother's death, just before my father's—I explored with Steel-Maitland and Stamp the possibility of my succeeding Young as Professor of Political Economy at the School and of finding a suitable successor to me as Director: the man whom I would have liked was Edwin Deller. Nothing came of

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this, except encouragement to take enough time from administration to get ahead with writing books, and a charming letter from Beatrice Webb:

April 5, 1929.

Sidney and I were very gratified by your two visits here—it is pleasant that you like talking to the old Webbs. That is one reason for our not being keen on your ceasing to be Director—no other Director would treat us as well as you have done!

Five years later, in the autumn of 1934, I returned to the charge in a document which, in emulation of H. G. Wells' engaging hero Kipps, I headed simply: "Schema."

1. By the end of the session 1934-35 W. H. B. will have been Director for sixteen years and will be fifty-six years old. He can continue as Director for four to nine years more. He does not wish to do this, unless it is necessary or highly desirable in the interests of L.S.E.

2. The post of Director is not inconsistent with other administrative work, such as that of the V.-C., or a member of a Royal Commission, or the Chairman of the U.I.S.C.,<sup>1</sup> but it is inconsistent with serious scientific work, because the Director cannot limit his availability to everybody at the School. A few recent problems before the Director include: Finer's leave of absence, Montague Burton Chair of Imperial Economic Relations, future of Business Administration Department, O.S.A.,<sup>2</sup> Pinkney, Rose, Sabarwal, Durant, Marxist Banner, School Constitution. These things must be dealt with by the Director, but do not call for any special qualities of W. H. B.

3. W. H. B. wishes to try scientific work in the field of Economics applied particularly to social problems. He wishes to do this for choice at L.S.E., in free co-operation with, but not displacing or interfering with, any existing teacher. Responsibility for organising all existing departments and for the teaching therein would remain with the present teachers or their successors. Responsibility for the School would be with the new Director, W. H. B. undertaking no part in the government and sitting on no committees except at the invitation of the Director. He contemplates himself with satisfaction as a Research Professor without defined teaching or administrative duties, but with an ear-marked grant for research assistance, and with permission to continue as Chairman of U.I.S.C. (which he values for

<sup>1</sup> Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Old Students' Association.

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money, position, and contact with reality). His general programme of research would include:

- (1) Unemployment and Population (with Hogben and economists).
  - (2) Government intervention in economic sphere (at home and abroad—with economists), as well as finishing Price History (with historians—though this is already covered up to a point by Shannon). While recognising that all research is a gamble and that no one can tell what his mind is like at fifty-six, W. H. B. believes that he might do more to help both Economics and L.S.E. in such a position than as Director. At least he would like to be allowed to use his remaining years this way, rather than in the present way.
4. W. H. B. might of course just resign being Director (at sixty or before) and look for the chance of scientific work elsewhere (he was approached from Cambridge some years ago). But for every kind of reason he would be very sorry to be anywhere else than at L.S.E.

From this followed the practical proposal of sending a confidential emissary to New York to discover if the Rockefeller Foundation would find say \$50,000 in the next five years to make W. H. B. a Research professor with research assistance.

Schema, shown only to the Chairman of the Governors (Steel-Maitland), the Vice-Chairman (Stamp) and the Secretary (J.), received the approval of all three: the last of the three was the obvious emissary to send. But the Rockefeller Foundation were making a general overhaul of policy. It became clear that the time was not ripe for any emissary to talk business with them, however informally. I was reduced to writing to Dr. Max Mason, the administrative head of the Rockefeller Foundation, a letter setting out our desires as "Project A." But his reply made plain that we could not get any real answer quickly, or make the change in the way desired as from October 1935. The Governors could have taken money to make me a Research professor from the general funds of the School, but neither they nor I desired this; it would have meant taking money from other professors. I had to go on as I was. By becoming a Research professor, as Schema made plain, I should have lost £500 to £1,000 a year in salary. As consolation for not being allowed this loss, the Governors gave me another £500 a year as Director, putting me up to £2,500 a year.

My efforts to escape from this post and salary continued. The next

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chance presented itself through the project of an Institute of Economic and Social Research on which Stamp and I and others had been working, with hopes of help from the Halley Stewart Trustees and other Foundations. The idea of my taking charge of this Institute, if it came to birth, was mooted between Stamp and myself early in 1936. The idea was put into store while I worked on the Rationing Sub-Committee from May to October. When Inskip's invitation to me to return full time to the Civil Service for war preparation was blocked by the Treasury, the Institute plan was revived. In the first months of 1937 it was put swiftly into shape; by the middle of February it seemed clear that I should soon be leaving the School of Economics to become Director of a National Institute of Economic and Social Research. Then, out of the blue, at the end of February came an invitation to submit myself for election as Master of University and so return to Oxford. This offered, among other things, another chance for my major aim of making economics an inductive science. I had no hesitation in accepting the invitation.

At the School of Economics, for some time, things had not been going well for my major aim. One of the measures taken there to bring social science nearer to natural science had been the establishment in 1930 of a Chair of Social Biology, with L. T. Hogben as its first holder. The establishment of this Chair had been approved formally, after lengthy discussion, by the Professorial Council. But neither Hogben nor his staff became acclimatised in Houghton Street. In October 1936 his principal assistant, J. L. Gray, left for a Chair at Witwatersrand. Soon after Hogben told me that he expected to leave for Aberdeen, as Regius Professor of Physiology, and he was appointed there from the beginning of 1937. The Emergency Committee of the School decided in March 1937 that the future of the Chair of Social Biology must be regarded as an open question. With my departure in prospect this decision was inevitable; the question had to be kept open for the new Director. But it meant that at highest the case for Social Biology in a School of the Social Sciences was "not proven."

In treating human biology as an integral part of the study of human society, as well as in most other things that I attempted at the School of Economics, I was following the Founders faithfully—more faithfully than I realised at the time. I print in my Appendix Beatrice's Diary note for February 20, 1900, which I saw for the first time when it was published in 1948.<sup>1</sup> It is a fascinating document in many ways. The Webbs wanted

<sup>1</sup> *Our Partnership*, p. 195 (Longmans, Green and Co., 1948). See Appendix A, Section 14, below.



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economics to be a Science rather than an Art for University purposes; they wanted to see it pursued by the scientific methods used in other organic sciences; they wanted mathematics and biology as the preliminary subjects for the economics degree. Incidentally, in 1900, Beatrice forecast the theme of my present volume: the Webbs had influence because no one suspected them of power. It is not easy for any honest writer on the last sixty years to get away from the Webbs.

Alas! The University of London and the School of Economics did get away from the Webbs. Economics and Political Science did not develop in London on the lines of Beatrice's note. In 1949 I told the story thus:

The degrees of the new Faculty were called degrees of Science in Economics, but the connection with Natural Science was never more than a name. For practical purposes the Faculty and its teachers in the University came to be grouped with those of Arts and Laws rather than with the scientists and medicals. Mathematics and biology did not become the preliminary studies for the economics degree. . . .

Thirty years later I found the Rockefeller Foundation ready to give to the School a large endowment to be used if desired for cultivating the borderland between the social and the natural sciences, and I persuaded the Governors to devote part of this endowment to the establishment at the School of a Department of Social Biology. . . . This second attempt to affiliate social science in London with natural science has failed, as the first attempt did. Perhaps thirty years after it a third attempt may come to lasting success.<sup>1</sup>

On the face of things an institution designed for the scientific study of human society cannot omit study of man himself. Economists, political scientists and sociologists, if they are to be scientific at all, must have intimate co-operation with those engaged in the study of man as an individual, that is to say with biologists, anthropologists and psychologists. In the conditions of London, with the Colleges so widely separated, it seemed to me that co-operation could be made certain only by having both the social sciences and their natural bases in the same College. And with my views as to the kind of science that economics should be, based on observation rather than analysis of concepts, the bringing of at least one first-rate natural scientist into the School had special attractions.

<sup>1</sup> *The Webbs and Their Work*, edited by Margaret Cole, p. 147.

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Admittedly also it presented special problems, both practical and personal. It was an experiment whose success depended on finding a first-rate biologist ready to try a new thing, and making him feel happy in a new environment. After Hogben's departure, we might not have found it easy at once to persuade another of equal calibre to join us.

The School would never have obtained from Beardsley Ruml and his Memorial the magnificent grants which meant so much for teachers and students throughout the School if we had not planned for the Natural Bases of Social Science. But, in accord with the policy of freedom for institutions that they helped, the Memorial gave their grant as general endowment without strings to it. The School was free to suspend or abandon the Chair of Social Biology, and after my departure it lost no time in doing so.

When all was over, in writing from Oxford to Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Foundation to argue, amongst other things, against premature attempts to co-ordinate the Social Sciences, I explained the fate of Social Biology to him as follows:

. . . . I think that the prospective failure of one particular experiment of mine in social biology to establish itself and bear continuing fruit at the School of Economics, is rather a good illustration of my thesis that you cannot cross-fertilise sciences until both are established. If we had had an economics at the School which was a science resting on observation, and not a dialectic, there would have been no difficulty about fruitful co-operation between the biologists and the economists. And ultimately the social sciences and the natural sciences will have to get nearer together, even though that may not happen in my lifetime.

Disappearance of social biology from the School of Economics was a symptom only of a larger defeat.

The great annual ceremony at the School was Oration Day, in the last week of the Summer Term. Each year since 1923 I had given as Director my Report on the work of the School in twelve months past, to be followed by an oration by a distinguished visitor, who sometimes took trouble and sometimes took none. For my last term as Director in 1937, it was natural that the oration should be given by myself. After eighteen years of the School of Economics I sang my swan song on "The Place of the Social Sciences in Human Knowledge." It had two themes, neither of a kind to be welcomed by most of my academic audience.

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The first theme was the need to treat economics, politics, and the other social sciences as inductive sciences based on observation, rather than on deduction from concepts. I quoted and adapted William Harvey:

I profess to learn and to teach anatomy not from books, but from dissections; not from the positions of philosophers, but from the fabric of nature.

I profess to learn and to teach economics, politics, sociology, not from books, but from observations; not from the positions of philosophers, but from the conduct of mankind.

I went on to attack the leading economist of our time for his most famous work. In his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Maynard Keynes had challenged existing economic theory in its foundations, as Einstein had challenged Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry. The parallel with Einstein was drawn by Keynes himself. But the parallel did not apply to methods. Einstein had started from observations—the Michelson-Morley measurements of light, the unexplained aberrations of the moon from its predicted place and so on; he had gone back to observation—of stellar positions in a total eclipse—for testing of his theory. Keynes had started not from any fact but from definition of a concept. He had announced his conclusions as certainties without verification of any kind. And Keynes's procedure had been accepted as adequate by practically all professional economists.

My second theme was, if possible, still more dangerous. It was a demand for detachment from political association of the teachers of any social science. On this point I admitted that I had changed my views since coming to the School. When the terms of my service as Director were under discussion in 1919, I had asked that I might hold myself free to become a Member of Parliament. "I should not make that request today or advise such freedom for my successor." So I recanted in 1937 my view of 1919. I went on to say that the reasons why I thought no Director of the School of Economics should be an active politician applied to professors and other teachers. I agreed that I was asking that University teachers of the social sciences should surrender some of their citizen rights

The civil servant is required to surrender certain citizen rights because, seated at the heart of government, he has so much power to influence its course. The judge makes the same surrender, by custom, if not by rule. The University teacher has been given—often irrevocably—a position of greater trust than that of judge or civil servant. The most

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precious possession of the community—the ripening mind of adolescence—has been placed in his hands; he has the moulding of the coming generation. . . .

I do not believe that a University teacher in the Social Sciences can become deeply and personally implicated in political activities and controversies, whether by membership of Parliament or by membership of party organisation, whether by writing or by speech, without losing something of his value as a teacher, something of his authority as a scientist.

The chemist—at least the academic chemist—does not begin an impartial comparison of the properties of leather and rubber by joining the directorate of a tannery. . . .

With a member of the directorate of the Labour Party sitting beside me on the platform as Professor of Political Science, this was trailing my coat with a vengeance.

I ended by comparing the long growth of natural science since Galileo or Harvey with the short period during which the data essential for social science had gradually become available.

In the past 150 years the natural sciences have won for themselves an assured place in public esteem, a safe kingdom of international co-operation, an influence second to none in all our Universities and Schools. For the Social Sciences that esteem and place are still to win—perhaps in 150 years to come. The two keys that can unlock the gateway to this promised land—both keys must be used—are observation and detachment.

Having exploded this bomb in Houghton Street, I went off to Oxford in September 1937, to see if there was anything that at the age of fifty-eight I still could do to shorten that second period of 150 years. I went back to the city of generous dreams and unconquerable hopes.

“O Alma Mater!” Syntax cried,  
“My present boast, my early pride,  
To whose protecting care I owe  
All I’ve forgot, and all I know.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dr. Syntax in search of the Picturesque. Canto VI of Tour to the Lakes.*

## *Book Three*

THROUGH WORLD WAR II  
TO ITS AFTERMATH OF DEFEAT



## Chapter XII

### OXFORD REVISITED

Revised memorandum to undergraduates sent out. Stream of men begins. I saw the last war from the bureaucratic centre, this is the other real end.

Diary Note for September 11, 1939.

#### 1. *Phoney Peace*

ON February 25, 1937, the Senior Fellow of University, Spencer Farquharson, wrote asking if I was willing to be considered as a candidate for the Mastership when the present Master retired on September 30. The present Master was A. B. Poynton, who had been Bursar when I was Stowell Fellow; he had been put in as Master for two years at the end of his time, in succession to Michael Sadler, my be-friender in Toynbee days.

Farquharson's letter, though written at the request of the Fellows, was studiously non-committal as to what would happen if I answered "yes": "For the situation as to votes I can't at present calculate." Nor was any hasty decision needed for the College; the post would not be vacant till October 1; the election would be in May.

For me an early decision, one way or another, was important. So on my birthday, March 5, I went to Oxford, saw each of the Fellows alone in turn, satisfied them that I looked like a tolerable Master and satisfied myself that return to Oxford, with its other attractions, would give me the chance of doing the scientific work that I desired. The salary was £700 a year less than I had in London, but with the house and other things there was no difference to count. The matter was settled in that week-end. The Fellows celebrated making up their minds on the Mastership by removing from their Common Room the bust of Alfred, official but unhistorical Founder of the College. Later I found Alfred flat on his face in a cupboard and had him restored to decent honour; in the ante-room of the Library he gazes now with natural pensiveness at the gigantic legal brethren—Lord Eldon and Lord Stowell. University has always had more statuary than it had good homes for. A new Library had to be built to remove Eldon and Stowell from overwhelming the readers in the old Library. But Shelley remained in his

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clammy passage. I made a plan later to remove Shelley to a shrine where no one need see him unless determined to do so, where he could be seen under something like the conditions of sunshine and light for which his effigy had been designed. I was prepared to surrender a bit of the Master's garden to be Shelley's fitting home—not too near to the chapel.

The Fellows, having made up their minds, helped me by magnificent speed to solve my London problems. I was able on March 9 to withdraw my name as Director designate from the letter launching the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, and I became instead for a short time Chairman of its Council. I was able to get my coming pre-election as Master and resignation from the School announced on April 3. This made it possible to find and settle a successor for me as Director before Stamp left for America in May.

There remained some practical problems at Oxford. At first sight of the Master's Lodgings as my potential bachelor home I blenched. The Lodgings were a Tudor manor house built in 1879; even after the loss of one wing taken over by the College for Fellows, they contained fifteen living-rooms, mainly of large size, above ground, with kitchens and five or six rooms as servants' quarters below ground. I invited my cousin Elspeth, now my stepdaughter, to be my lady of the house. I persuaded the College to let me turn Sir Michael Sadler's picture gallery into a modern electric kitchen and servants' room. I replaced the back-door by a hatch with a bell, opening direct on the kitchen from Logic Lane. I abolished open fires throughout the house. I converted the servants' hall into a basement store for files and books. I provided against growing fat by turning a small stone-encircled space into a court for deck tennis.

Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Foundation, with whom I had had happy collaboration on the Bloomsbury site eleven years before, was in England again in the summer of the year in which I moved to Oxford. In Oxford itself much was astir towards a development of Social Science. Lord Nuffield's gift for the foundation of a College whose work would lie mainly in that field had just been announced. An Institute of Statistics had been established in 1935. The new honours school of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics established after World War I was drawing each year a larger number of students.

I had a talk with Fosdick in September, and sent him later, with other reading matter, a Programme of the Social Sciences. "The social sciences are still in their infancy and very largely have still to be made." Their unsatisfactory condition "has a simple explanation—that broadly speaking the Universities have no organs for research and advanced



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teaching comparable to the laboratories of natural science. . . . The remedy is to give them research laboratories and time to work there." Against a common demand for co-operation between researchers of different interests, I stressed the need for specialisation:

Ultimately, the subject matter of the social sciences is one—man-kind in society—and all the social sciences have points of contact; so that in theory there is much to be said for co-operation and cross-fertilisation. But fruitful cross-fertilisation assumes a certain age and stature in a science, as it does in a plant or in an animal. Merely putting diverse studies together will not cause them to breed results; neither animals nor sciences can breed viable progeny unless they are themselves grown up. I doubt whether any of the social sciences have yet reached the stature making cross-fertilisation their most important need. The natural sciences were built up by specialisation: in separate laboratories of physics, chemistry, biology, botany, etc., not in a single laboratory of "natural science."

With the Programme went a copy of my School of Economics swan song and a letter which, after explaining one of my failures there,<sup>1</sup> went on to my personal activities.

Meanwhile Oxford is a completely new and exciting life to me. As I told you when I saw you, I have come to think that what I personally can do best for the social sciences is to do some work in them myself (with a few like-minded people) in place of spending all my time organising opportunities for others. I am beginning to find a little leisure for serious study, and I have actually got one first-rate research student doing just what I am going about saying all research students should do: that is, working under my supervision on a problem that I want solved and on which I am working myself, in place of writing a thesis to please himself. Between us we are trying to find out (a) why there are so many thousands of unemployed in all the prosperous parts of the country (taking Oxford as a starting place only); (b) how many "unemployed jobs," i.e. unfilled vacancies, there are, and of what kind and why. More generally I am studying what unemployment is under security (i.e. unemployment insurance).

As my reaction to Keynes's *General Theory of Employment* I had written an *Analysis of Unemployment*, as an example of studying unemployment by observations and not by concepts. I went on now to

<sup>1</sup> See p. 252 above.

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begin applying the same procedure to the Trade Cycle, the mysterious alternation between boom and depression which dominated economic life till World War II. From statistical examination of successive fluctuations from 1870 onwards I came at once upon two facts about the Trade Cycle which seemed new and whose interpretation would throw light on the cause of fluctuation, suggesting for it an origin in agriculture rather than in finance. Having spoken of this discovery at the British Association at Cambridge in August 1938, I offered an article on it to Keynes as editor of the *Economic Journal*. Keynes bore no malice for what I had said about him in my swan song at the School of Economics. He was more than ready to print me, and suggested doing so in the Economic History Supplement to the *Journal*. I demurred: "All this doesn't seem to me economic history but economics as economics should be." To which Keynes answered: "You say that this stuff is not economic history but economics as it should be; I should say that it is economic history as it should be." But he printed me, as I wanted, in the *Economic Journal*, in March 1939.

The first-rate research student whom I had mentioned to Fosdick was Harold Wilson, just fresh from the Schools. I got him made Research Fellow at University with some teaching duties, and, before World War II descended on us, we wrote a good many chapters of a joint book on the Trade Cycle; in a programme of research which I drew up in June 1939, publication of this work was announced for early 1940. The war not only stopped us but led my colleague before long to desert academic for political life, and learning for power. It stopped not us alone but appears for the present to have brought the Trade Cycle also to an end. But the first chapter of the nine that we completed has permanent value and is short enough to print here in full:

### 1. THE PROBLEM POSED

"This is indeed a mystery," I remarked. "What do you imagine that it means?"

"I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Conversation with Sherlock Holmes, Esq., reported by John H. Watson, M.D., in *A Scandal in Bohemia*.

Without another word we plunged into a sea of data in Chapter II:  
THE GENERAL EMPLOYMENT RATE IN BRITAIN.

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My June 1939 Programme of Research named three other works in hand for publication, each in collaboration with others: "Unemployment Statistics, 1927-38" with D. G. Champernowne; "Cyclical Fluctuation before 1850" with A. M. Mackintosh; "Prices and Wages in England from Twelfth to Nineteenth Century" with various collaborators. It set out a string of further projects:

### *New Researches Begun or Projected for Near Future.*

1. Trade Cycle—with J. H. Wilson and (it is hoped) as part of Economics Research Group. Following up *E. J.* article of March 1939 and stencilled "Facts for Trade Cycle Theorists" to determine:

- (a) Nature and Origin of Impulses to Cyclical Reversal.
- (b) Nature and Symptoms of Ripeness for Reversal.

This involves on one hand:

- (i) Study of Relations of Agriculture and Industry (Production, Stocks, Prices).
- (ii) Analysis of Economic Time Series directed to testing particular hypotheses.

2. Labour Market—with J. H. Wilson and in supervision of inquiry projected by National Institute of Economic and Social Research into working of Labour Exchanges.

Collaboration with Jewkes and others.

3. Questions arising out of Unemployment Insurance and Unemployment Assistance

"Philately"; Employment Records: Relations of Benefit and Wages, etc., etc.

4. Weather Periodicity.

Prophecy as to 1940-41 made and recorded. Testing will involve a small expenditure in obtaining early returns from barometric stations and on computing.

### *Other Researches falling within Sphere of Special Interests and Knowledge*

Working of Control Schemes.

Location of Industry and Population.

In explanation of "Philately" in item 3, it may be necessary now to explain that this term, being the Greek for stamp collecting, meant the

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practice of so arranging work and payment as to collect for the same amount of work as many insurance stamps as possible and so establish or increase one's claim to unemployment benefit under the regulations then in force. The share fishermen of Cornwall and East Scotland became enthusiastic and ingenious philatelists, even to the extent of transferring ownership of their boats to their wives and being hired by these wives for wages.

The prophecy as to weather periodicity named as item 4 was sealed and locked up in the bursar's safe at University and still remains to be tested. Unfortunately it involved barometric stations east of India or in the Balkans. I may find, when I come to it, that Hitler and the Japanese between them have destroyed with other things the chance of proving my theory in relation to 1940-41. Fortunately my prophecy named later years also, including 1953 and 1970, as years when acute barometric disturbance should be expected. The Coronation weather in which I write these words encourages opening of the safe again and testing my theory for 1953. I cannot count on being here for 1970.

The largest of all these projects was the History of Prices and Wages—four volumes for England only. I transferred Price History, which I had started and made international at the School of Economics, with all its files, to the Master's Lodgings. I managed to get the first volume of the English history, *Price Tables from 1550 to 1850*, published before war descended again. War descended in a literal sense, the bulk of the volumes printed being destroyed in Messrs. Longmans' store during the war-time bombing and fire of London. When I left University, the files went north with me to Tuggal Hall. They have found now a permanent home in the Institute of Historical Research in London.

In preparing the first volume of Price Tables I found myself often at a loss for a word. I was wanting continually to present averages neither for ten years or less nor for anything so long as a century. In a letter to the *Sunday Times* in June 1938 I asked for a new word for a twenty-year period, corresponding to "decade" for ten years. The letter evoked forty different suggestions, including one from the United States. Among many monstrous hybrids some of my correspondents went for pure Anglo-Saxon "twenter" or "twentig"; others for pure Greek "icad"; others for pure Latin "vicennium" (which had in fact been used already—in 1846). I plumped for English "score."

In Oxford, by contrast with London, there was no need for the head of a College to spend time on University affairs. Still less need he concern himself with City affairs. But the physical situation of my own College

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on the High brought forcibly before me one tragic change in Oxford since my undergraduate days. The suggestion which I accepted and publicised from one of my Fellows, that the walls of University were now in danger of being shaken down by the lorries thundering past them, was contradicted by another Fellow; our predecessors, he declared, had built more stoutly than that. But there hung outside our Common Room an engraving which battered at my heart and seemed a call to battle for bringing back the past. The engraving shows three gowned Fellows, no doubt from University, in philosophic discussion just outside the College, standing not on the pavement but well out on the roadway of the High—its only occupants. I joined the Oxford Preservation Trust, of course. I reached soon the conclusion that all plans for by-passing the High, to enable the new Cowley population to reach the station or the Cornmarket shops through Christ Church meadows or by destruction of other beauties, were tinkering. The population of a second town had been added at Cowley to the old town of Oxford. The only remedy was to make Cowley a complete new town—with its own amenities of shops, places of entertainment, public offices and so on. Having taken steps to that, one could prohibit any new shops or places of resort for the Cowley inhabitants being established outside Cowley; one could announce that, in five or ten years' time, all wheeled traffic in the High, from Magdalen Bridge to Carfax and in the streets off the High, would be prohibited, except for people living in the academic enclave. As in Whitechapel thirty-five years before I had dreamed of a super-millionaire stopping the outward sprawl of London, by buying a ring of land round it for an inviolable green belt, so I dreamt now of a millionaire who would save Oxford by financing a Cowley Development Trust. The Trust, having bought the heart of Cowley for a new city centre, would lure the first store or cinema there by asking hardly any rent at all; it would raise its rents step by step for later comers; in the end it would pay its way. I believed and believe that this was an entirely practical plan—given the millionaire desiring to help Oxford, and open to wise influence as to what Oxford needed. I looked forward, before my days as Master should end, to holding philosophic converse where my predecessor in the picture had talked—in the middle of the roadway outside University.

But Hitler was having a different dream from mine. Today I am reduced to citing Oxford in lectures as the crucial example of irremediable destruction of ancient beauty in towns, by failure to control the use of land. There was ample room for the Nuffield works west of historic

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Oxford on the Botley Road, in place of east of it in Cowley. If the works had gone to the Botley Road and houses had been built round them, the inhabitants could have used the Oxford shops and station without destroying the academic enclave by noise and traffic.

My Master's life was exciting, not simply because it gave me again the hope of doing scientific work. It gave me in the College administrative and human problems on a manageable scale. The Fellows expected and helped me to do new things. I persuaded them to add allowances for children to the College stipends. I persuaded them to join with a group of other Colleges in offering scholarships in Modern Subjects, including a General Paper in whose setting and examining I took an active part; conducting *vivas* on this taught me how rapidly any examination, however original its inventor thinks it, may become the subject of cramming. Having electrified the Master's Lodgings, I went on to electrify the College kitchens—a reform which proved a godsend when in World War II much of the staff disappeared for good.

My Master's life gave me contact with young minds, also on a manageable scale. It was possible to do some entertaining and to get to know all the men. I brought the School of Economics Rugger Team and their chief Union officials to meet the University men at a week-end. I took a discussion class in social problems. I addressed College societies. The notes of one such address, which I had forgotten wholly, show that already in 1938 I was speaking of the demand for an income in unemployment as a revolution in conditions of life, in economic structure, and in people's ideas of what is a proper standard of life. "Security is now part of the standard." I quoted my new experience on the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee. "Everybody demands insurance—agricultural workers, black-coated workers, outdoor domestic servants." I ended by asking whether all this social insurance was merely ransom by the rich to buy off the social revolution; this had been a favourite theme of Harold Laski. Here are the notes from which I spoke:

... Some of my friends of the Left tell me that progress comes only through frightening the governing classes—they say that this came so. This does not accord with my memory of how this revolution in particular happened.

The beginning—Labour Exchanges Act 1909 and U.I. in certain trades in 1911—followed on Report of Royal Commission 1906-9, showing nature and reality of unemployment.

Very difficult to see the ransom motive anywhere.

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Not in Royal Commission or myself or others—including Webbs.

Not in Government of those days—Radical believers in social progress—Adventurers like Winston Churchill.

To me a crucial illustration of the power of science—revealing facts.

Justification for social science.

I say justification, because the revolution to me is a good one.

I gave an address in Chapel in my first month as Master, in October 1937, in which the danger of war came to the surface: "Brightness has gone from our vision of the world. . . . It used to be said that the dark places of the earth were full of the habitations of cruelty. Today cruelty does not hide in dark habitations: in war and in persecution it stalks abroad." In my time at the University "the task which seemed to lie nearest our hands was . . . the increasing of social justice; the ultimate abolition of poverty. For your generation the most urgent problem is different from ours: to establish international justice as the condition of social justice; to establish peace within which civilisation can advance."

There was peace for Britain still in my first years at Oxford again but not peace of mind. In the spring of 1938 I went to Scandinavia and found there occasion to reopen communication with Thomas Inskip—the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence who had so narrowly missed employing me eighteen months before.

April 13, 1938.

I have just returned from a lecture tour in Scandinavia and Holland organised by the British Council. I talked about Unemployment and British Universities, and the Scandinavians and Dutch talked to me about Germany and fears of war and the prospective disappearance of the rights of small nations. It does begin to look as if our capacity to stand up to Germany, if necessary, and give and take punishment was the last bulwark defending individual life and liberties in the world against totalitarian intolerance.

Thinking of it in that way, and also having done a good deal of my trip by air, I became impressed also to the extent to which distance has been annihilated by the aeroplane. That puts it into my mind to ask whether the natural place for building aeroplanes in defence of Britain and the British Empire is not Canada, rather than in Britain itself.

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I went on to argue my case at length, dotting as usual every "i" and crossing all the "t"s.

Please forgive the impertinence of my writing this. Almost certainly you will have thought this all over already and have decided either against it or for it, but at any rate, I hope it won't be too much trouble to you to read this letter. You need not answer it.

The Minister answered that he thought he agreed with everything I said in my letter. But he said also, without seeing the point that saddened me, that the question of obtaining aeroplanes from Canada had been under consideration "for a long time."

I returned from Scandinavia to work away at the History of Prices, Unemployment and the Trade Cycle. Unexpectedly, through a streptococcic tooth, I found myself in the last quarter of 1938 withdrawn from interest in world affairs and as near to being withdrawn from the world itself as at any time in my life. My temperature would not go down. My expert friends at the Radcliffe Infirmary assured me that I was as intriguing a case as they had known. At last J. caused them to call in my former admirable G.P. from Kensington, Dr. Arnold Viney. He came and suggested a proprietary drug. I took it and my fever disappeared like mist before the sun. I had been saved from feeling concern about Munich; it did not interest me at all. I returned to the world of the British guarantee to Poland.

And there descended on me three young men—one of them an old member of the College—with a plea for Federal Union across national boundaries as the sole way to peace. These young men—Patrick Ransome, Derek Rawnsley, E. J. Kimber—made me a Federal Unionist and I have remained one ever since. There was an older man at Oxford of the same faith—Lionel Curtis—with whom I worked and argued nightly in the same field.

I made the first declaration of my new faith in a meeting on November 11, 1939, addressed by Gilbert Murray and myself in University Hall, where thirty years before I had expounded "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry." "Federation across national boundaries may appear to some to be Utopian. But if it is Utopian to try to fashion a world altogether different from that in which we live today, we must be Utopian." I ended with the words that stand as text to my Epilogue in this volume.

I went on to make several speeches on the same theme in the first six months of war; winning majorities both in the Oxford and in the Cambridge Union Societies for Federal Union as against any weaker



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step for peace. I turned my Peace Aims Memorandum for the Old Dogs into a pamphlet on *Peace by Federation*. I made a journey to Manchester to preach this cause in February 1940, during some of the worst weather of the century. I spent the week of Narvik in Paris discussing Western Federation with like-minded Utopians. And on international affairs I made two remarks perhaps sufficiently relevant to current issues to be worth recalling today. One was in a letter to *The Times* of December 12, 1939, on the scuttling of the *Graf Spee* by Hitler's orders on the coast of South America.

The condition of assured peace with justice in Europe is that there should never be substantial armaments again under the control of a German Government. Herr Hitler, by destroying the *Graf Spee*, has taken the first welcome step towards that goal.

The other remark came in a speech in London on January 25, 1940.

When Germany is ready to return to civilisation she must be embraced not on terms of servitude but of partnership. Unilateral disarmament of Germany has already been tried and failed. This time such a policy is impracticable in face of the growth of aggressive Communism in Russia.

### 2. Phoney War

In the last days of August 1939 I drove north from Wiltshire to Dundee for the meeting of the British Association. The Soviet agreement with Hitler had been announced a few days before. In passing through a Scottish village, as I heard the baker on his round ringing his bell, I wondered how long the established simple life which his daily visit typified would go on. In Dundee the British Association, after one night, decided to postpone the rest of their meeting and I drove back to Oxford to be at my post. In Leicester, on the way, I saw posters announcing "Evacuation Tomorrow Official." War was practically certain.

My return to Oxford was convenient personally. My cousin, Elspeth, who had kept house for me in the Master's Lodgings, had planned to get married at Christmas, but the war hastened this, and the wedding took place on September 9. The reception was pleasantly attended, among many others, by the most senior of my predecessors as Master, R. W. Macan. The war diary which I kept for just six weeks records on this day: "Champagne and speech by me on the realities in garden." I wonder now what nonsense I may have talked then.

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At the beginning of September the Long Vacation normally had many weeks still to run. Now for a short time the Fellows and I found ourselves unwontedly busy for that time of year. We had to make arrangements for becoming a reception College, taking in addition to our own reduced numbers men from other Colleges which would be used as Government offices; the Merton and the St. Peter's Hall men were assigned to us. We had to settle a policy as to remuneration of ourselves and all others employed by the College, on salary or wages. We adopted the general principle of maintaining pre-war incomes unchanged, whatever work the individual undertook. For men joining the fighting forces we would make their service pay up to whatever they had been getting in peace, whether as Fellows or as College servants. If any of us—this applied particularly to Master and Fellows—was asked to do war work with pay attached to it, he would hand over that pay to the College, continuing to draw his College emolument without change. This was the general principle that seemed to us suitable to the conduct of total war. No man should lose by being ordered to fight. No man should draw personal profit out of common danger. We would take the £ sign out of serving the country in war.

Very soon it became clear that my formal duties as Master would be reduced; there would be fewer men and less for me to do in getting to know them. And the personal purpose for which I had come to Oxford, of getting down to economic research, seemed out of place. On the other hand, I had practical experience, from World War I and from the Civil Service in peace, which might be of use in the new crisis. I offered my services to the department with which I was most concerned, the Ministry of Labour, then under Ernest Brown. I wrote to Hankey, newly added to the War Cabinet, and to Horace Wilson, high in favour with the Prime Minister, to tell them of my idleness. I did not get, and I did not expect, any immediate result from these letters.

I found others of the ancient war horses of the earlier time, Maynard Keynes, Walter Layton, Arthur Salter, in the same position as myself. Beginning with September 12, we took to meeting regularly at Keynes's house in London, to confer on war problems as we saw them, and to volunteer our advice to anyone whom we thought to be in need of it. In his biography of Keynes, Mr. Harrod describes these meetings and some of their results, though he uses a different zoological term, speaking of us as the "Old Dogs." Our meetings continued for two months at least. One of our early topics was the proposed evacuation of Government departments, against which we made to Horace Wilson long reasoned

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protests against the lack of co-ordination that must ensue. Another discussion resulted in an article by myself to *The Times* on "War Without Waste" published on October 3 with a supporting leader next day. It prescribed as the two necessities for efficiency at the centre, an Economic General Staff, and a small War Cabinet free of departmental duties, on the model of that which had brought victory in World War I. It was to this gathering also that I submitted a memorandum on the need for an early announcement of Peace Aims.

Keynes, on his side, among other things, wrote letters to *The Times* in September and October on Government borrowing and produced there in November two articles on internal war finance which led to voluminous correspondence and public comment.

Layton recalled how in World War I the Board of Trade had sent out from the beginning the Z8 employment inquiry, prepared by myself as part of the book of preparations for war. This questionnaire had formed the basis of man-power planning during that war. Layton was horrified to find that no similar inquiry had been prepared for use in the present war; the Ministry of Labour was content apparently to rely on unemployment statistics. He tried to persuade the Ministries concerned into taking this problem seriously—with no success in the Phoney War and with little success for months after the change of Government.

But Layton's experience in regard to employment statistics was not typical. The most surprising thing to me today on looking back at these activities of the Old Dogs is the respect with which we were treated by the Ministers and the officials whom we set out to advise. Our criticism of plans for evacuating many Government departments from London to the provinces received not an acknowledgment and promise of consideration, but a lengthy reply and an invitation from Horace Wilson to discuss the matter with William Douglas, in person and by letters. Criticism of what appeared to me the wrong policy of putting traders in the Ministry of Food in final charge of the foods which they administered, led not only to lengthy and laboured correspondence between Henry French and myself, but to repeated meetings and dinners with Lennox-Boyd, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food. On the management of exports a discussion arose with Stamp which lasted two months, from the end of November to the beginning of February.

Even more voluminous was a correspondence between Hankey and myself in February 1940 as to the nature of the War Cabinet, of which he was a member. This body of nine or ten, including four Service chiefs, had been announced on appointment in the previous September as a

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Cabinet "on the lines of the Cabinet established by Mr. Lloyd George in December 1916." I had challenged this description at once, in a letter to *The Times*, as *The Times* itself did editorially. Geoffrey Dawson, in his first time as Editor, had lived as I had through the passage from the first to the second Coalition of World War I, and was ready to support the merits of Lloyd George's invention of a War Cabinet combining power to decide with time to think. But perhaps because I hoped that, good or bad, the Government might find a use for me, in this first letter on the subject I signed myself Gyges, the Heroötean hero who made himself invisible with a ring. When five months later, in February 1940, I returned to the charge over my own name, Hankey set out to correct me privately both on facts and on their interpretation. There followed between us a written argument as zestful and as academic as any that rejoiced the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages: Hankey maintaining that the Cabinets of September 1939 and December 1916 were as like as two peas, while I said they were as like as chalk is to cheese.

Most surprising of all was the reception of a letter which on March 2, 1940, I wrote to Mr. Churchill at the Admiralty, calling attention to my meteorological studies, saying that there were reasons for believing that the weather of Western Europe would be unsettled and rainy for most of the present year, and suggesting that this should be taken into account in planning the war. I chose Mr. Churchill for this "because I expect that you are the best address in the Government for new ideas." This produced a friendly personal letter from its recipient, and two letters from Kingsley Wood at the Air Ministry, sending me reasoned comments of his Meteorological Department. Kingsley Wood had any amount of time and consideration for me when I talked about weather periodicity early in 1940. I was not treated so kindly by any Minister when in 1943 I wanted to talk to them about the Beveridge Report.

The plain fact is that in the first months of World War II war had practically not begun for Britain, and the Ministers and officials responsible for our affairs had leisure to treat politely outsiders who wished to advise them. Equally it meant that they felt no pressure to invite outsiders, of our age and experience, to undertake war tasks. I was successful in introducing younger colleagues and friends to departments. For myself, in the first nine months of the war, the only suggestion made of work for the Government was an invitation which came to me from Sir William Brown, then Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade, about the middle of October 1939, asking if he might suggest me as Chairman of a Price Regulation Committee, under the Price of Goods Bill just intro-

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duced. My answer was to send to William Brown some notes which I had prepared before I received his letter, criticising, in language far from polite, the Price of Goods Bill, and the policy underlying it. In view of this, it was plain that I would not make a good Chairman to help to administer the Bill when it became an Act. I am glad to say that, while telling William Brown that I could not decently accept his offer, I added that I had no wish to be carping; I would not publish what I thought of his Bill, and I did not do so.

So I continued with my fellow Old Dogs in the role of outside critic and adviser and producer of letters and articles in *The Times*—on “War Without Waste,” or “Butter and Guns,” or the nature of Hitler, or the best form of Government for war. Apart from this, I returned to my economic studies at Oxford.

The change of Government in May changed the atmosphere in which I wrote and advised. As a first indication of this, I had a letter to *The Times* on Government Reconstruction rejected for length. It was not in fact as long as what *The Times* had printed from me on February 6. But the accomplished change of Government made it out of date by the time that it reached Printing House Square. My letter argued for placing the centre of gravity of any new Government to the left, rather than to the right, of our common centre, and for a new management of war, manifestly, and even exaggeratedly, democratic in principle and personnel.

I hoped that the change of Government and more active prosecution of the war might lead to a demand for my services. My friend, Lord Bledisloe, writing to me about a College affair, added his urgent desire that I should now be put back again in charge of food. To which my answer was that food was a simple problem; the real teaser would be man-power. I wrote to the new Prime Minister offering help, with the plea that my special experience lay in devising new types of Government machinery for dealing with new problems, but he was too busy already to send me more than two lines to say he had nothing in view for me.

In fact, the change of Government brought all the Old Dogs sooner or later into some kind of harness again. Layton was swept into the Ministry of Supply at the beginning of June. Keynes acquired a room in the Treasury early in July and achieved soon a central position in our dealings with the United States on war finance. Salter had been in since November 1939.

I might have been full-time in Government service as soon as Layton was. At the beginning of June Ernest Bevin invited me to take charge of a new department for welfare which he wished to build up, with the

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Factory Inspectors, transferred from the Home Office, as nucleus. I didn't feel that welfare was up my street and I made counter-suggestions; organisation of man-power was my goal. On reflection I came to feel that I ought to accept any chance of doing Government work in the war and I went back next day to say that I would take the welfare job. But the Ministry had already made an alternative plan. So during June 1940 I was left with time on my hands still after real war had begun.

## Chapter XIII

### THE OTHER WAR

When we beat ploughshares into swords, we should exchange also three other P's for S's: profit for service, party for State, procrastination for speed.

Article on "A New Spirit for Total War,"  
in *The Times*, March 17, 1942.

THE title of this chapter marks two general distinctions. The Other War, from the end of May 1940, is different from the Phoney War that preceded it. The Other War, from the end of May 1940, is different from the war going on at the same time which has been described by Mr. Churchill. Practically none of the experiences recorded or the problems considered in this chapter is mentioned in the text of any of his volumes; they appear at highest in brief minutes in some of the Appendices.<sup>1</sup> Yet these experiences and problems are as much a part of total war as is the clash of armed men in battle, or the discussions and manœuvres of their leaders in council.

The title of this chapter marks also a distinction personal to myself between 1914-18 and 1939-45. In the earlier war I was in the Government machine, near the centre of two of its major developments for total war—the Ministry of Munitions and the Ministry of Food; as a civil servant I never expressed my own views in public. In the later war I was in the Government machine only for a few months at a time for special jobs. I was the last of the Old Dogs to be taken into use and I was never absorbed as the others were. I remained for most of World War II a voice outside the Government, expressing personal views by letters and articles in *The Times* and elsewhere, by broadcasts, in books, and finally in the House of Commons.

There was a difference also in the source of my income. In World War I, I was a civil servant paid by the Government. In World War II, I was Master of an Oxford College; the principle which we laid down on the outbreak of war that members and staff of the College should neither gain nor lose by service to the country in war applied to me as to others.

<sup>1</sup> Thus my Report on Skilled Men in the Services is the subject of two minutes in Vol. III, Appendix G, and my Report on Social Insurance appears in two minutes of Vol. IV, Appendix F, of *The Second World War*.

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All my work from beginning to end of the war, whether for the Government or for the College, was done on my salary as Master; whenever it seemed right to ask the Government to pay anything for my services, the payment went to the College. On these terms I did for a short time get back to what appeared to me the central problem for Government in total war—the problem of making right use of man-power. On these terms I went on to a variety of other tasks.

### 1. *London Life and Labour under Air-Raids*

At the end of June 1940 I was asked by Ernest Bevin to make a survey of man-power and its existing use. I accepted, and on June 28 I was announced as Commissioner for Man-Power Survey. The appointment was hailed by my friends and the Press as important. I knew that it was nothing of the sort. But it kept me in the field where I wanted to be.

The Man-Power Survey was conducted with the help of a considerable staff—largely volunteers—in sheds placed on the gardens of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. It led to a substantial Report with many supporting memoranda, some printed with it, some printed in summary only. This Report, presented formally on October 4, is now almost unobtainable. The Ministry officials ordered from the printers a bare minimum of copies for distribution to other departmental chiefs. When I protested and asked for more, they ordered more, but they found, I think to their relief, that the printing works had been bombed and the type destroyed in the interval. So the Report remains one of the rarer documents of the war. Whether any of its select recipients used it in any way I do not know. For myself it served three purposes. It got my foot into Whitehall again; before the Survey ended, I had been put upon a real task. It gave me occasion for inventing a phrase which appeared later as a text on the title page of *The Pillars of Security*: “the art of leadership is making common men do uncommon things.”<sup>1</sup> It gave me experience of working and living as an ordinary citizen of London under bombing. I included in the Report of my Man-Power Survey a section on London Life and Labour under Air-Raids. I print this today to show how things looked before the Battle of Britain was won.<sup>2</sup>

Among other things, some of the temporary offices used for the Survey were destroyed by a bomb. This turned to my personal advantage, for I

<sup>1</sup> This definition may be compared with Hitler's in *Mein Kampf*: “The art of leadership consists of consolidating the attention of the people against a single adversary.” Hitler is dead, but his doctrine of leadership has many disciples today.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, Section 15.



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was given a room in the New Scotland Yard building of reinforced concrete; but a safe room for work did not solve the problems of eating and sleeping.

I was dining at the end of the Reform Club nearest to the Carlton Club when the latter club was hit, and much glass in the Reform Club crashed. I have been told by fellow guests, as a sign of my quickness of reaction, that I was the first of the diners to be seen under a table. Thereafter we spent the night receiving guests from the Carlton Club, dealing with incendiaries, and rescuing library books from fire and water. I remember looking out from a window of the Reform Club and thinking how attractive as a fire-work an incendiary on the lawn beneath us looked. I did not realise until afterwards that it had fellow incendiaries upon our roof. After the fire, the Club was closed for the duration of the war, but I refused to be ejected. I took to sleeping in various underground parts of the Reform Club, including, for a time, the space under the front steps. Finally I settled down with J. C. Masterman, now Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, in one of the basement passages. I hired the neighbouring bedroom and used that as an office, but slept in the passage.

When, from late September onwards, I took to working for the Production Council on Man-Power Requirements, I suggested to the authorities that, in view of the importance of my work, they might find me somewhere safer than the Reform Club basement to sleep in. They said that, of course, they would do this, and they offered me part of the basement of Richmond Terrace, next door to the room in which Clement Attlee was being housed. One sight of this basement under a Regency brick building of no substance, with a ceiling partially supported by a new girder, convinced me that it was less safe a refuge than the Reform Club, so I went back to the Club. Very soon also, possibly after considering my reactions to Richmond Terrace, a place was found for Attlee in one of the solid stone buildings elsewhere.

In New Scotland Yard I felt so safe that I never troubled to take refuge during daylight raids, but as soon as twilight came and night raids were probable, I made a dash for the Reform Club and worked and supped with my assistants in the basement bedroom next to my bed. One of these assistants was Jack Golay, an American Rhodes Scholar at University, who declined to go back to his own country while it was not at war and stayed in Britain to help Britain. He came on with me to my inquiries on Skilled Men in the Services and Social Insurance, and for a time joined our Air Force.

At week-ends I went regularly to Oxford. At one of these week-ends

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I talked to one of my favourite young men, on leave from training for the Army at Catterick. He felt it paradoxical that I should be in peril in London while he, of the right age for danger, enjoyed perfect quiet in Yorkshire. Happily he is one of those who came through the war to safety again. From this week-end I returned to find the sky red above London; it was the night of one of the great fires. But I did not go to look at the fire. All my time in London I never saw an enemy aeroplane, or its lights. I thought discretion was the better part of valour and kept under shelter, though the shelter that I had, apart from New Scotland Yard, was not of a kind to stand a direct hit, or a near hit.

In September there were day raids as well as night raids. I remember two things in particular. First, as I went out one morning after an early raid while the shopkeepers were still sweeping up their broken windows, I said to myself that I should never get the sound of sweeping up broken glass out of my ears. I thought also that if, to broken sleep each night, there was to be added continual diving into shelters by day, serious work in London would become small. The second thing that I remember gave the happy answer to this thought. In the most critical of all the daylight raids I realised suddenly, with a lifting of the heart, that the raiders were finding it impracticable to get beyond the outskirts of London to its centre. That was the turning point in the Battle of Britain. The battle, as we all know now, might easily have turned the other way. Then the productive resources of London would have become continually less available. All the folly and lack of foresight of the British Governments between the wars in letting London grow would have come home to roost.

### *2. Real Work on Man-Power*

I had used my continuing leisure in June 1940 to write a memorandum on "Preparing the New War," which I sent to a few friends. Treating Britain as an advance military base for this war, I had named as a fundamental need comparison of departmental programmes and of man-power resources. In August, the Production Council, constituted in the new Government with Arthur Greenwood as Chairman, decided to appoint a Committee of all the departments concerned to make this comparison. They asked me to become Chairman of this Committee, and through it to compare statistically the resources of man-power with the requirements for man-power implied in the departmental programmes. They allowed me to have as secretary of the Committee my "first-rate research assistant" from Oxford, Harold Wilson, and for the handling

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of figures my Price History statistician Miss Rayner. My abandoned Oxford researches proved excellent training for the tasks of total war.

The work of this Man-Power Requirements Committee involved knowing the programmes of the Service and Munitions departments and was highly secret. From this point of view one of the most important members of the Committee was Sir Charles Bruce-Gardner of the Ministry of Aircraft Production. Air-power was the most urgent need at that moment and I had continuous discussion with him as to how much man-power would be absorbed in meeting this need. The work of the Committee involved cross-examining each of the departments upon their programmes and on the types of man-power needed. One of the memories most vivid to me from that examination is of Oliver Franks, as an outstandingly good witness. He came before us to cover all the wide and varied field of the Ministry of Supply; he always knew his case perfectly; best of all he knew his case so well that he could afford to be reasonable and accept from us changes which saved man-power without sacrifice of anything vital.

Our investigation led to the presentation of an Interim Report early in November and a Second Report about the middle of December. The central feature of the Second Report was a Master Table showing how the available males of the country must be distributed, and how many women must be brought into the munitions industries to achieve the programmes of the various departments, as agreed after examination. There went with this table the warning that, though physically the programmes set were within the capacity of the nation, their realisation within the time set could not be made certain. From this came the practical conclusion that, to avoid calling men into the fighting forces who could not be armed when they were called up, the formation of the fighting forces should be kept in step with the progress of munitions production: armaments rather than armies were the bottle-neck at that moment.

To the statistical estimate of what must happen in each industry to yield the results required, were added suggestions for action of many kinds: for dilution and de-skilling of jobs and introduction of women in engineering, for a campaign to replace men by women in other industries, for maintenance of industrial output in spite of air-raids, and so on. To each of the Reports of the Committee I added notes of my personal views as Chairman. In the note to the Interim Report I dealt at length with many practical problems of man-power and the conditions of their solution. In the note to the Second Report I expressed scepticism as to

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the possibility of achieving the programmes in the time set for them. This note was in effect a plea for unity of command in munitions production and man-power; given the personalities of the Ministers concerned with these problems at the time, unity was unlikely to be achieved.

The Second Report of my Committee—its main work—was presented on December 11, 1940, and had a curious fate. On December 19 it came before a meeting of the Production Council attended not only by the actual members of the Council, but by a large disorderly concourse of representatives from departments; there ensued a debate which Arthur Greenwood as Chairman made no attempt to control or to guide to conclusions. I was not surprised that, soon after, the Production Council disappeared; it was replaced by two new bodies with different Chairmen—the Production Executive under Ernest Bevin and a Lord President's Committee under John Anderson.<sup>1</sup>

With the disappearance of its parent body, the Man-Power Requirements Committee could hardly continue in the same form. But some of its work was continued, very congenially to myself, in a Man-Power Committee of which Ralph Assheton, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour and National Service, became Chairman, with myself as Vice-Chairman. This Committee reported to the new Production Executive; I continued through it to pour out memoranda about man-power problems.

In its short life the Man-Power Requirements Committee accomplished or started several useful things. The Second Report was applauded to me personally by some of those who saw it as bringing sanity and a broad view, for the first time, into consideration of the vital problem of how to make best use of our limited man-power. The most important recommendation was that, whatever the size formally approved for each of the fighting forces, the actual calling up of men should depend on the supply of munitions for them. Acceptance of this policy by the War Cabinet was announced by Ernest Bevin as Minister of Labour and National Service in the House of Commons on January 21, 1941.

In the few weeks for which it lasted after the Second Report, my Committee produced two further Reports, on Regional Labour Requirements and Colonial Man-Power, and began on the case for Industrial Compulsion and its Difficulties. In a memorandum which I wrote in December 1940, I summed up the case concisely: "The case for industrial compulsion rests on the strategic necessity of speed, on the psychological necessity of fair play, and on the impossibility of convincing the public

<sup>1</sup> See *The Second World War*, Vol. III, pp. 101-3.

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of urgency so long as the Government refrains from using powers which it is known to possess." In January 1941 the Cabinet approved a new labour policy in accord with this; the Minister of Labour might use the powers given him by Parliament in June 1940, for direction of men to work, to whatever extent might be necessary to secure an adequate labour supply for national work.

The Second Report, moreover, in addition to posing questions of policy for decision by high authority, had a section on practical problems and proposals. One of these proposals was for reconsideration of the existing method of reserving men from the fighting forces. We argued that exemption of a man from military service should depend not simply on registered occupation but upon the man being employed on work of national importance in an occupation in which he could not be replaced by a woman. Reservation, properly handled, might be a means, not merely of obtaining for the fighting forces the men that they required, but of promoting transference of men from unimportant to important work as civilians, whether in the same or in a different industry. It could even, if the rules of reservation were announced in advance, be made a means of encouraging training and upgrading. Selection for and exemption from military service could thus become an instrument for securing the right use of man-power industrially as well as in the fighting forces.

At Christmas 1940 I found myself summoned hastily to the Ministry of Labour. One of the Under-Secretaries had fallen ill. I was asked to fill the gap by taking charge of the Military Service Department of the Ministry, with a view in particular to making a new Schedule of Reserved Occupations. I accepted the task and became for the next five months an Under-Secretary in the Ministry, of which my former assistant Thomas Phillips was the Permanent Secretary. The main result of this was production of a revised Schedule of Occupations filling 150 printed pages. It was approved by the Minister and put in force as from April 10, 1941. In view of its effective authorship, I have included the Schedule in the bound volumes of my miscellaneous writings.

As Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Labour I was formally responsible only for the Military Service Acts, which at that time applied only to men and to the terms on which they should be conscripted to the fighting Services. But introduction of industrial registration with the possibility of direction to follow made it essential to consider all man-power problems together; conscription for fighting and direction to munition work could not be dealt with on inconsistent lines. A Labour

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Supply Board of all the chief officials with the Ministers met regularly to consider common problems. As an Under-Secretary I was a member of this Board, and I took any chance open to me to put forward memoranda and proposals over a wide field. Particularly I urged the need of introducing more discipline into munition work, and the need for conscription of women, if there was to be hope of fulfilling the programmes assumed in the Report on the Man-Power Requirements Committee.

On the first of these topics I submitted early in 1941 a memorandum suggesting the application to essential work of something like the control intended to be exercised in World War I under the Munitions of War Act, control that would prevent continual change of work without reason, either at the will of the employer or at the will of the employee. In accord with what I had urged many years before under the Munitions of War Act,<sup>1</sup> I proposed that decisions whether a man might or might not leave his present work for other work should rest, not with his employer, but with an independent officer of the Ministry of Labour; a leaving certificate should be required, but it should be the certificate of the Ministry. The Minister was taken with the idea, but naturally modified it, increasing the control against the employer as well as against the workman. There followed at the beginning of March the Essential Work Order. In any undertakings scheduled as essential, the employer's freedom to discharge and the employee's freedom to leave his employment were curtailed, each having to give notice of at least a week. Eventually nearly nine million workers came to be covered by this Order.

On the other problem, of conscription of women, I started from one of the conclusions of the Man-Power Requirements Committee, that to carry out the defence and munitions programmes, a great and rapid increase of women's work was indispensable, in the Women's Services, in munitions industries, and to replace men called to the fighting Services. The Minister, however, said that he would not apply compulsion to women except in the last resort. For a time, accepting this, I confined myself to asking, particularly through Ralph Assheton, for the setting up of a Women's Department within the Ministry, and for getting new blood into the Ministry to run it. This was in February 1941, but led to no action. In May I fired another and heavier shot, with a memorandum starting from the basic figures of the Man-Power Requirements Committee, that to fulfil our programmes would mean that in the next six months more than a million women would have to change their

<sup>1</sup> See p. 132 above.

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occupations, and in many cases their place of living. I inferred from this that the Service programmes could not be fulfilled unless we applied conscription to women forthwith:

There is no real hope of obtaining by volunteering, in the time proposed, the numbers of women required for the Defence Services as well as those required for industry and for substitution. If, therefore, the meeting of these requirements is regarded as essential, conscription of women is inevitable.

There is no insurmountable objection of principle to conscription of women. It would be accepted by the British nation if the urgency of the situation were realised. But acceptance involves for many people a change of view and a greater appreciation of the war situation than is yet general. Special steps may be needed to bring about this change of view.

In these paragraphs I summarised at the beginning what seemed to me inescapable conclusions. I dealt with the practical and psychological difficulties of conscribing women in the final paragraphs of the memorandum, which I print now in the Appendix to this volume.<sup>1</sup>

I sent in this memorandum on May 21. It took the Government six months to accept its argument. When at last they did so, they learned that the argument had been right all the time. The National Service Bill extending conscription to women for the first time in Britain became law on December 18 without any opposition worth counting.

The passing of this Act served to demonstrate the determination of the Government that there should be complete mobilization for war; and because it was accepted by the public without demur, it demonstrated the will to win of the whole country.

So the official history of the Ministry of Labour records the achievement. I, on the other hand, could not help feeling, as I feel now, that the event justified one of the sentences in my memorandum in which I compared the speed of Government in World War II unfavourably with its speed in World War I. Ernest Bevin's answer to my argument for immediate conscription of women was to procrastinate—and to part from me.

My memorandum of May 21 on conscription of women was my swan song as an official of the Ministry of Labour. The coming together of all the problems of Man-Power, including Woman-Power, had made Ernest Bevin realise that he needed a single officer in charge of them all

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 16.

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and he wanted someone other than me. He appointed Godfrey Ince as Director-General of Man-Power.

He looked for other outlets for me. The main outlet was an Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services which Arthur Greenwood was about to appoint. Another outlet was invented by a colleague of mine in the Military Service Department, J. S. Nicholson, who thought it sad that I should do nothing more about man-power. He suggested a Committee on the Use of Skilled Men in the Services with myself as Chairman, and the suggestion was welcomed by the Minister. It had the advantage of making me a critic of the Service Departments rather than of the Ministry of Labour.

So on June 9, 1941, I was bowed out from Whitehall. The critic on the hearth was driven into the winter of post-war reconstruction with a small fire of temporary war work on Skilled Men in the Services to keep him warm. I did not like this bowing out. As I confessed in my first speech on the Beveridge Report after its publication, I was frankly a little sad at what I was asked to do in June 1941:

We all think we can poke the fire a little better than the other fellow. I'd have liked a hand in poking the fire of war.<sup>1</sup>

With the German attack on Russia just beginning, the war did not seem to me won. Even after I left the Ministry of Labour, I explored first with Andrew Duncan the possibility of my joining him at the Ministry of Supply to deal with man-power problems. But this came to nothing. I hugged my last scrap of war work, on Skilled Men in the Services. After the first meeting of the Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services, I sent my departmental colleagues away to write memoranda describing all that they were doing and their problems as they saw them. I told them to do this well rather than with undue haste. I was going to be busy for the next months on Skilled Men in the Services.

I celebrated departure from the official ranks of the Ministry of Labour and National Service at the beginning of June 1941 in two ways.

First, I abandoned the salary of £1,000 a year which had been paid to me since the previous October by the Government, and in consideration of which I had given up a corresponding amount of salary from the College. I thought it desirable that as Chairman of the Committee on Skilled Men I should be completely a volunteer, as far as the Government was concerned. Second, I started writing articles again in *The Times*,

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Savoy Hotel, December 9, 1942.



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criticising Government policy freely. In particular I published on June 26, 1941, an article giving the case for a Ministry of Civil Defence and demolishing to my satisfaction the case against it which had been presented by Mr. Herbert Morrison in debates of June 11 and 12. This article brought me back to the practical problems of London Labour under Air-Raids. I had paid a visit to the Temple to look at the ruins which had been my chambers. I found a friend of mine with a suitcase digging out his law library, book by book, from the ruins in Middle Temple Lane. He was devoting every week-end to this solitary exercise. I felt that the least that I could do for him was to make him an argument in *The Times* for improving Civil Defence and for providing help to private citizens, if defence had failed.

I went on to prepare two other articles, one dated June 29 on "Ministers and Civil Servants" and one dated July 26 on 'A Case for a Wage and Income Policy.' Each was likely to lose me any friends I still possessed in high quarters in the Government, but for one reason or another neither of them saw the light at that time. The main reason was, I suspect, that I was getting too busy at Skilled Men in the Services to put either of them into final form. The first of them raised issues as to the Civil Service which it has seemed worth while to place on record in this volume.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. *Skilled Men in the Services and Fuel Rationing*

My work as Chairman of the Committee on Skilled Men in the Services opened a new field of interest. I had three admirable colleagues in George Bailey of Metropolitan Vickers, J. C. Little of the A.S.E., and R. G. Simpson, an Edinburgh accountant. I had Harold Wilson as Secretary to the Committee, and as Personal Assistants Frank Pakenham and Jack Golay.

The duty of the Committee was to inquire how each of the three fighting Services made use of the skilled men in engineering occupations who had entered them, to report whether we thought these skilled men were being used to the full and on any measures taken to train them, and finally, in the light of what we found, to say how far the demands of the services for skilled engineers should be met by further calling up of skilled men from industry.

Our first job was to visit a number of typical stations in each of the Services. Here the R.A.F. went away with a flying start. They had

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 17.

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appointed to work with our Committee two Group Captains, Storrar and Carter, who assumed that the Committee ought to look first at the R.A.F. and drove me at aircraft speed over the roads of every Eastern, Midland and Northern county of England. When the Navy, a little slower but grander, realised what was happening, they also treated us royally. I was piped in with all the honours to Rosyth, swept to Fort William, Donibristle, Portsmouth, Brighton and many other places. In Brighton I had the interest of seeing how the cubicles for the Rodean girls were adapted for occupation by two vast men in each. I saw also the first magnetic mine which had been washed up to our shore and had yielded its secrets. The Navy made a desperate effort to get us to Scapa but we had to abandon that. The greater part of our concern was, not unnaturally, with the Army. Chilwell, Newmarket, Huntingford, York, Kidbrooke, Worthing, Shorcham, Bury, Stoke, are some only of the stations to which I went personally. Agents of the Committee, Frank Pakenham in particular, went to many more.

But we were not content to look at what the Service Departments wanted to show us. We had received from two industrial firms and three railway companies lists of their skilled engineers who had gone into the Services. We had received from three engineering trade unions lists of their members who had gone into the Services, and were said not to be employed according to their skill. We decided to see personally a number of men from both of these lists. I myself, sometimes with another member of the Committee and sometimes without one, though generally with the faithful Frank Pakenham, interviewed nearly two hundred of these men individually at the Committee's Office in Egginton House, London. Frank Pakenham saw nearly as many more at stations throughout the country. We included individual reports on each of these men and our findings in regard to them as an Appendix to our Second Report.

Having been appointed on June 9, we made on July 30 an Interim Report as a guide to the Ministry of Labour as to how far they should go at once, in meeting the outstanding demands from the Services. In this we found ourselves able to praise the high degree of dilution of skilled men by semi-skilled and unskilled men that each of the three Services had accomplished. They had in this vital task no trade union difficulties to contend with. We praised also their extensive systems of technical training.

We made a Second Report on October 31. In this, as might be expected, we found that the Army came off worse than either of the other Services. Recruiting for the Army was by the Corps, and not for the

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Army in general. Many men had been called up as Territorials and Reservists for their old Corps, irrespective of any special skill they might have acquired. Others, being engineers, had made a bee-line for the Royal Engineers, not realising that the bulk of the work of that distinguished corps is civil, rather than mechanical, engineering. Our interviews produced many fascinating human stories of misfits and many jammy quotations for the Press:

Lance-corporal, 28, formerly electrician at a university, studied for three years at a college of technology. Now cooks for a section of Military Police.

Corporal, Royal Engineers, 41, electrician; went to France as electrician. On return made mess waiter. Protested—job restored after six months.

R.E. sapper, 46, qualified blacksmith. Doing "two days each month of blacksmith's work, chiefly pointing picks; rest of time using picks."

Infantry sergeant, 29, semi-skilled machinist; firm wanted him back; not granted. Beveridge comment: "Seems to have been made sergeant as alternative to release."

These were selected by the *Daily Express* for its headlines. Perhaps the pleasantest remark was made to us by a highly skilled and responsible man who came before us as a sergeant in the R.E.: "I am having a jolly good time of it in the Army, but I don't feel that that is what the War is for."

With a number of minor suggestions for all the Services, we made for the Army two major proposals: for the establishment of a new corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and for a period of general enlistment for six weeks into the Army rather than into any particular Corps; during this period the special capacities of each man could be discovered, and his choice of Corps made in the light of them.

The treatment of this Report by the Government of the day was as curious as the treatment of the Report on Man-Power Requirements. In reporting to the Minister of Labour, who had appointed me, I suggested that, as the Report made serious criticisms and proposed important changes in the Defence Services, the Minister of Defence, in spite of his

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happening to be the Prime Minister as well, might reasonably see the Committee or myself on the Report. Nothing happened on this suggestion of mine; no communication of any kind was made to us; nor was the Report immediately published. Having become interested in our work, we went on seeing more and more stations in all three Services. We had called what we signed on October 31 our Second Report; we were ready to make a Third Report, if anyone asked for it.

At last, on February 18, 1942, three and a half months after our Report on a vital war problem had been presented, the Report was published, with a memorandum by the War Office, to some extent answering our criticisms.<sup>1</sup>

The Report had a good reception in the Press—and on February 19 it formed a principal theme in discussion of the Army estimates in Parliament. A few days later the Secretary of War was changed. Captain Margesson, who had presented and defended the estimates, resigned and was replaced by Sir James Grigg, a civil servant.

I had known Grigg of old. One of his first acts was to send for me and tell me that our two main proposals—for a period of general enlistment in the Army and for a Corps of Mechanical Engineers—were being accepted. I said to him that the Conservative Members (the 1922 Committee as they called themselves) had invited me to address them on the Report; it would be well that they should know of the War Office decisions beforehand. He told me that he would like me to announce the decisions to the Conservative Members. I urged that this seemed rather unusual procedure though very graceful from my point of view, but he insisted; so I made the announcement, saying kind words about Sir James Grigg in doing so. I found my kind words met by chilly silence. The Conservative Members of Parliament did not feel happy that an excellent House of Commons man should be parted from office, to make place for a civil servant. I wondered whether Grigg realised that there might be this feeling and that it was better to postpone his meeting with Members of Parliament.

The Committee on Skilled Men in the Services represented as pleasant and as directly fruitful work as came my way in the war. It was pleasant because of the way in which, in spite of our questioning and our criticisms, we were treated by all three Services, including the Army. The War Office memorandum, while putting their case, was a studiously

<sup>1</sup> The genesis of this memorandum has now been shown, by publication, in Appendix G of Vol. III of Mr. Churchill's account of the *Second World War*, of two minutes of the Prime Minister to the Secretary of State for War, on November 13, 1941 (p. 749) and on December 21, 1941 (p. 756).

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courteous document. In effect, we helped reformers in the War Office to get reforms which they had long desired.

The work of the Committee had repercussions beyond its special scope. Presentation of the Report fell into the period of strain and criticism of his Government described by Mr. Churchill in Chapters 3 and 4 of *The Hinge of Fate*. In one of the questionings of the Minister of Labour about the delay in publishing the Report on Skilled Men in the Services, one Conservative Member drew from the delay the inference that the Prime Minister should have a colleague in the Cabinet able to decide for him such questions as arose on the Report. A second Conservative underlined this; the delay seemed to her "to prove that the Prime Minister cannot be Prime Minister and Minister of Defence at one time."

The Report increased my reputation as a Reporter, both publicly and with the Government. It all but led to my being set upon another inquiry of like character—into the labour demands of the Supply Departments. The Report, whether or not it was read by the Minister of Defence, did get read by others of the War Cabinet, including John Anderson, who was concerning himself with production and wanted machinery established for settling the labour needs of the Supply Departments in the light of the general man-power situation. He thought well of my work and suggested to Ernest Bevin that I should be asked to review the needs of industry for men, in the same way as I had reviewed the needs of the Services. I thought such a Labour Supply Inquiry might produce very interesting results, particularly in discovering how far the high degree of dilution which we had found in the Services existed also in civilian employment, and how far it was being hindered by the conservatism of employers, of trade unions and of individual workmen, maintaining old customs in face of national need; I should have loved to put my finger in that pie. So I was ready to take this new inquiry as my next war job, particularly if I could have with me a trade unionist of the sanity and standing of J. C. Little; Ernest Bevin was favourable; and by the end of January 1942 all seemed agreed in principle. But the prospect of Government changes described by Mr. Churchill in Vol. IV, Ch. 5, held up action in February, and in March Ernest Bevin wrote to me that, in view of Oliver Lyttelton's appointment as Minister of Production, no further action was likely. So I was free to undertake and did undertake instead, as an addition to Social Insurance, the Fuel Rationing Inquiry requested of me by Hugh Dalton as President of the Board of Trade.

This inquiry was not one that I would have chosen, nor did it improve

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my reputation. I was not asked to say whether fuel should be rationed. That was settled before I began. "Mere exhortations were not enough. The Government had decided that a comprehensive scheme of fuel rationing should be introduced as soon as possible. He had invited Sir William Beveridge to report to him on the most effective and most equitable method of restricting and rationing the consumption of fuel and power." So ran Hugh Dalton's opening announcement on March 17, 1942. Remembering February 1918, I commandeered Stephen Tallents to help me, and made a rationing scheme in five weeks, as a points system with interchangeable coupons, not concealing its difficulties. In announcing receipt of my scheme, Hugh Dalton stated once more that the Government had decided to ration fuel. But he found opposition too strong in the House of Commons and, I suspect, in high quarters of the Government. After a debate on May 7 and 8, fuel rationing was first postponed and then allowed to fade out by stages, while a new Ministry of Fuel and Power was established to save the face of the Board of Trade and its President.

In the House of Commons I was accused of frivolity for having made a Report on fuel rationing in a month. I replied in *The Times* that this was the pace at which we had learned to work in World War I. Today I am thankful that my scheme was never tried. The best reward of my month's work was Low's cartoon on April 30—Hugh Dalton and I staggering under load to present "The New Meter, Mum" to an astonished housewife with a mop.<sup>1</sup>

### 4. *Wandering Voice*

After less than a year on three different jobs of Man-Power I became in June 1941 for the rest of the war a wandering voice again, as I had been till July 1940.

Some of my songs I sang at the request of the Government, with accompanists and instruments provided by them. There came first the Report of the Committee on Skilled Men in the Services, described in the previous section. There came next my Scheme for Fuel Rationing, also described in that section. There came finally the Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services, signed on November 20 and published on December 1, 1942. It forms the theme of a later chapter here and of a book by J. that will be published shortly.

Other songs I produced without request by the Government and

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in *The Pillars of Security*, p. 32.

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seldom to their liking. I was sure of a theatre for my performances in *The Times*, with good prospect of a leader coming in as chorus to support me, whether I was arguing against Herbert Morrison for a Ministry of Civil Defence, or against Ernest Bevin for a Wage Policy, or against the Prime Minister for a War Cabinet of 1916-18 model. Other papers were equally ready to print me. The B.B.C. gave me important chances, not so much for criticism as for expounding the nature of total war and for exhorting my fellow citizens.

I was particularly vocal as a critic in the first three months of 1942, with a letter to *The Times* on January 26 and articles in the same paper on February 16 and March 17.<sup>1</sup> The last of these, on "A New Spirit for Total War," had the unusual distinction of being reprinted by permission in another paper—*The News Chronicle*—two days later. It lacked nothing in outspokenness. "First, we have carried on into the war with too little change the peace-time economic structure of the country and the system of economic rewards. . . . Second, we have carried on with too little change in our political as well as our economic structure. . . . Third, with our peace-time economic and political structure, we have carried on into war our national habits of compromise and procrastination." I rubbed salt into each of these three cuts. Of the first cut, at Ernest Bevin: "We have, generally against the advice of our economists, treated our work-people as if they were 'economic men,' unamenable even in war to any motive stronger than personal gain." Of the second cut, at Mr. Churchill: "It was a misfortune when the present Prime Minister accepted leadership of a party, and thus consecrated the practice of party bargaining as the basis of War Government." Of the third cut, at the Government as a whole: "With the pace set by the enemy . . . leaders must take the risk of leading": "Yet in this country, since May 1940, as before, we have had a Government which in many ways has followed public opinion instead of leading it. We have had—not, indeed, from the Prime Minister, but from some of his lieutenants—delay, compromise, procrastination, both practised and defended."

My most effective broadcast followed five days later in a Sunday Postscript on "The Meaning of Total War."<sup>2</sup> I was keeping many different irons hot at that moment. On the afternoon of my *Time*,

<sup>1</sup>The articles of February 16 (following appointment of Lord Beaverbrook as Minister of War Production) and of March 17 (after he had declined this post and a different change of Government had been made) were reprinted in *The Pillars of Security*. The letter of January 26, referred to again below, is printed in Appendix A to this volume.

<sup>2</sup>The Sunday Postscript on March 22 and *The Times* article of March 17 were both reprinted in *The Pillars of Security*.

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article of March 17 Hugh Dalton announced my Fuel Rationing Inquiry to the House of Commons. On the same day as this article Maynard Keynes wrote to me to express his enthusiasm for my social insurance scheme; on the Monday after my broadcast—March 23—he and I laid the foundations of our financial deal about the scheme, described in Chapter XIV. A month later I was still active as Chairman of the Skilled Men in Services Committee, presiding in that capacity on April 14 over a meeting representative of the Tradesmen Interview Boards established in each of the Army Commands. All the time I was doing all the essential work of Master of my College, with one of the Fellows appointed as Vice-Master from what I earned for the College by work for the Government. I did not suffer from monotony of occupation in World War II.

And I enjoyed a fantastically good Press. “A double-deck cannonade,” “revolutionary,” “inspiring,” “will be read nowhere with keener interest than in the forces” (this from a Conservative M.P.), “a noble lead,” “brilliant, idealistic,” “altogether excellent,” were a few of the innumerable bouquets showered on my March article or broadcast. “Britons, you owe this man a lot”: “The man no government can do without”: “Benign Beveridge”: “Sir William Beveridge has shown how skilled men are wasted in the Army. He is one of the country’s greatest skilled men. Yet we are wasting his talents”—this was the sort of thing said about myself.

I had become a wandering voice, not by choice, but of necessity. I found my energies concentrated less and less on war problems and more and more on what should happen after the war was won. The plain fact is, that from my experience in the earlier war I was at odds on a major issue with each of the dominating personalities and wielders of power in the Coalition which led us for five years from May 1940 to victory in May 1945—with Mr. Churchill and with Ernest Bevin.

In regard to Mr. Churchill, I was second to no one in admiration for him as an indispensable war leader, but like all great men, he had the defects of his qualities, and some of these defects seemed to me then, and seem now, to have made the conduct of the war needlessly difficult. He was personally concerned with the military war, but did not deal himself with the Other War. He would not set up the kind of government which to me, judging by experience of the First War, was most needed for the conduct of total war, namely, a War Cabinet, primarily of non-departmental Ministers, able to give rapid but fully discussed decisions on major issues of policy over the whole field of total war, military and non-military. In season and out of season I tried in articles, letters and



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broadcasts to hammer home my view on this. My most outspoken effort in this direction, in a letter to *The Times* of January 26, 1942, on the conduct of the war, produced for me a letter of general agreement from Lord Hankey as having been "the architect of Lloyd George's system of the War Cabinet" and having been in the Government in World War II since 1939. "The present system," wrote Hankey, "is in theory and practice a 'one man show.'"<sup>1</sup>

My letter produced also a message from Lloyd George through Miss Frances Stevenson.

Ll.G. was very much touched by your reference to him in your letter to *The Times* yesterday and I thought you would like to know how much he appreciated what you said about his war organisation in 1916.

We both thought your letter brilliant and very lucid, going right to the heart of the "present discontents." If the Prime Minister does not listen to advice so graciously given, I think he is quite hopeless and we shall go from bad to worse.

The remark about the graciousness of my advice referred no doubt to the last sentence of my letter, which, though meant to be appealing to Mr. Churchill, had probably a contrary effect.

Mr. Churchill, as I did not fail to remind him, had described Lloyd George's System as well as anyone, in writing of World War I.<sup>2</sup> But he did not want the system for his own use in World War II. At a moment of difficulty, under pressure, he moved towards it in February 1942, when he included in a War Cabinet reduced to seven Stafford Cripps without Portfolio as Lord Privy Seal and Oliver Lyttelton as Minister of State with the duty of "exercising general oversight over production." But when he felt stronger, towards the end of 1942, he moved Cripps out of the War Cabinet again to a departmental task. As he has now put it himself, in reviewing the Cabinet changes of this time, he did not suffer from any desire to be relieved of his responsibilities. "All I wanted was compliance with my wishes after reasonable discussion."<sup>3</sup>

Gracious or ungracious, right or wrong, I found myself cut off from the Prime Minister. He did not see me on the Report of the Skilled Men in the Services, though as Minister of Defence he was the natural person to have seen me on that, and though I asked to see him. He did not see me when, just before the House of Commons debate on the Beveridge

<sup>1</sup> My letter of January 26 is printed in full in Appendix A, Section 18, with Hankey's letter of the same date and a leader comment from *The Times*.

<sup>2</sup> *The World Crisis*, Vol. iii, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup> *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 78. Mr. Churchill gives on pp. 78-80 a letter from Sir Frederick Maurice, supporting his view, as from experience in both wars.

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Report in February 1943, I asked for the chance to consult him about my own actions in the future. I spoke personally to him only three times during the war: at an unexplained talk which I had with him, at his invitation, at Chequers on March 8, 1941<sup>1</sup>; at the luncheon on the *Queen Mary* in May 1943 described by J.; and on my first appearance in the House of Commons in October 1944.

With Ernest Bevin, I was on different and at first friendly terms, as I was naturally with most of his officials. The machinery available to him for dealing with labour problems consisted of the labour exchanges which I had started under Mr. Churchill thirty years before, and those now in charge of it were largely men who had entered the service in my time there. In World War I the labour exchanges were an invention very much on trial. In World War II they were an accepted part of the social structure. Ernest Bevin, as I have recorded in Chapter VI, had not liked the labour exchange crowd in World War I. But he found in them the instrument for doing nearly all that he did in World War II.

Through Ernest Bevin and Arthur Greenwood I did for nearly a year get back to man-power problems in World War II. But Ernest Bevin did not seem to me to have exchanged procrastination for speed; there was no reason for him to take seven months till January 1941 to decide to exercise the powers voted by Parliament with acclamation in the June before, and there was even less reason for him to take six months after May 1941 to accept my argument for conscription of women. Apart from this question of speed, I remained at odds with him as to the need for a wages and prices policy. Defence of the Realm Regulations under Act of Parliament passed in the emergency of May 1940 gave him full control over wages, but this control was never exercised fully or systematically. Ernest Bevin said to me once that he did not mind how much any munition worker earned if he produced the goods. In my view, this attitude led to injustice between individuals and to lower production generally. "There's no escape from compulsory arbitration about the conditions of work and wages in war-time. . . . This should have been a no-profit war from September 3, 1939."<sup>2</sup> The principle we laid down for ourselves at University when war began, that no one should make personal gain out of common danger, was an article of faith. Bevin, knowing that view, was prepared to use me for work where this difference of view would

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Salter as well as myself was at Chequers on this occasion and was put almost at once thereafter to a new job. For me nothing happened and nothing could happen easily. My field was man-power, and that in practice had to be left to Ernest Bevin.

<sup>2</sup> So I put my point in a broadcast discussion with Donald Tyermann in June 1940.

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not come to the surface, that is to say, in relation to matters other than the organisation of labour and industry. He asked me first to take over the Factory Inspectors, which on the formation of the Coalition were transferred from the Home Office to the Ministry of Labour. He used me to make reports for a Man-Power Survey and on the War Potential, and finally as a full-time official in charge of the Military Service Department of the Ministry. When this appointment was announced my old friend and fellow economist Pigou wrote to me from Cambridge:

I am *tremendously* glad to see that they've at last called you to clean the Augean stable! More power to your elbow! Don't bother to answer. LIBERAVI ANIMAM MEAM.

I felt it necessary in answer to save him from excessive hopes:

Ever so many thanks for your letter. I am afraid I have not yet been given charge of the Augean stable but only part of it, which is very much less Augean than the rest—namely National Service and the allocation of men between fighting and civilian employment. There are at least signs of something moving, but I am afraid that wages policy is the last thing that will be put right.

While the new Schedule of Reserved Occupations, which was my first task in this new post, was being completed, I started a fresh hare—of the Essential Work Order—with some success. But, as is told above, it proved easier in practice for the Ministry of Labour to assimilate my ideas than to continue to assimilate me. Ernest Bevin wanted power and his own way as urgently as Mr. Churchill did.

That Bevin, who, until he left his mineral water van to take his first trade union job as a £2-a-week district organiser, had shown small appetite for power of any kind had now become increasingly preoccupied with it is obvious. His appetite for its possession grew with the exercise of it and there is some justice in the accusation that at this time he often exercised it autocratically. There is truth, too, in the criticism that he did not easily accept men about him of his own stature—he tended to surround himself in the organisation he led with able lieutenants of the second rank and to keep away from the centre of things those who showed signs of rising to the first rank. He did not tolerate any potential rivals to his throne.

This is one of several passages of like tenor in the latest biography of Bevin by an admirer.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ernest Bevin: Portrait of a Great Englishman*, by Francis Williams, p. 112 (Hutchinson, 1952).

## THROUGH WORLD WAR II

It may be that Ernest Bevin was right and I was wrong on the point of principle about need for a wages policy on which I differed from him. Some months after I had left the Ministry of Labour and National Service, I appeared before a Parliamentary Committee on Home Defence Services to tell them about the Man-Power Requirements Committee. This talk led to a request from the Committee for my views on wages policy, to which I answered on October 9, 1941.

I have no doubt at all that production has been delayed through the Government not having control of wages in the past because this has meant:

- (a) stopping or delaying desirable transference of labour;
- (b) encouraging undesirable movement of labour in search of higher earnings and in other ways.

But how serious these matters are today I just cannot say because I have no knowledge. On the answer to the question of how serious these difficulties are today depends the decision as to whether it would be worth while now to change the Government policy. The only way that I know of getting an answer to that question would be by some kind of independent investigation involving detailed inquiry both of employers and of trade unions and of employment exchanges. "Independent" for this purpose means independent of the Ministry of Labour, which naturally and rightly is engaged in making the best of the Government's policy.

Such an investigation might result in showing that the trouble was not now very serious—that by now some of the worst anomalies had been overcome, and that by the national gifts for compromise and tolerating the theoretically intolerable we were getting over the difficulties created by bad policy. If it showed still serious continuing delay to production and other evils, the case for revision of policy would be made out.

This letter, with its plea for inquiry before judgment, seems to me the right approach to practical problems.

It may be that Mr. Churchill was right and I was wrong on the other point of principle on which I persisted in differing. He did take us to victory in the end. None of us really doubted that he would do so. But some of us thought that he could get us to victory sooner, with less bloodshed, if he were prepared to leave more decisions to others. He need not, for instance, have taken four months, as he did, to decide on the

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treatment of skilled men in the Army; that could have been done at once by a separate Minister of Defence who had not the whole war on his shoulders. This was a small matter, but not without its moral. In Chapter XV I give a more important example of something that might have turned out better, for the country after the war and for Mr. Churchill himself, had he been less of a "one man show."

Unfortunately, the work to which from October 1941 I found myself limited, of making a plan for social insurance after the war, did not help to bring me nearer to either of these dominating figures of the war. For Mr. Churchill the Beveridge Report at the end of 1942 was a nuisance—another fly buzzing round his head while he fished for victory by moving troops and their weapons. For Ernest Bevin with his trade union background of unskilled workers having little in the way of friendly benefits, social insurance was less important than bargaining about wages. He referred to the Beveridge Report as this "Social Ambulance Scheme." When in the Parliamentary Debate of February 1943 he found all the unofficial Labour Members bent upon voting for the Report and against the Government, while he, as a member of the Government, must go into the lobby against them under a three-line Whip, he was very angry. Though I was innocent as the babe unborn of what any member or party did or said on that occasion, it was natural for Ernest Bevin to transfer some of his resentment to me, as the author of the Report which caused the storm.

Even without these differences on major policy with two of the major personalities of Britain I was, I have little doubt, an uncomfortable companion to departmental colleagues and their chiefs. With my memories of World War I, I could not avoid—who can avoid?—praising past times and men and comparing the men of today unfavourably with them. During World War II, I found myself in Whitehall always in the role of a critic of my colleagues. Ministers and civil servants alike might be excused for feeling that I would be more comfortable outside. I bore no malice to them then and I certainly have none now.

Democracies in total war need, as slaves of a dictator do not need and cannot get, some voices of private citizens outside the Government machine, to help in maintaining their spirit and in securing from them their free service to the common cause. In so far as I found myself one of these citizen voices in World War II, I tried not to be captious even when I was critical. I hope that in the main I succeeded.

## Chapter XIV

### MAKING OF THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

I have no doubt at all that we know how to abolish want through economic insecurity and that it's in our power to do so as soon as the war ends, on one condition—that we've won the war.

Broadcast on *The Meaning of Total War*, March 22, 1942.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. *Commissioning of Committee*

ON May 22, 1941, Mr. Ernest Brown, as Minister of Health, announced in the House of Commons that a comprehensive survey of social insurance would be made by the Minister without Portfolio, Mr. Arthur Greenwood. There followed, on June 10, appointment of an Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services, with myself as Chairman. There were eleven other members of the Committee, each an official representing one of the eleven Government departments concerned. The Secretary was D. N. Chester of the War Cabinet Secretariat. The terms of reference required the Committee—

To undertake, with special reference to the inter-relation of the schemes, a survey of the existing national schemes of social insurance and allied services, including workmen's compensation, and to make recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

These announcements had a political and a personal background.

The political background was that the General Council of the Trades Union Congress for some time had been pressing the Government for a comprehensive review of social insurance.<sup>3</sup> A deputation of the Council, received in February 1941 by the then Minister of Health (Mr. Malcolm MacDonald) and the Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Ernest Brown), had stressed particularly the inadequacy of health insurance cash benefit as compared with other benefits, and its inequalities from one contributor to another under the Approved Society system. They

<sup>1</sup> Printed as chapter 3 in *The Pillars of Security*.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, Section 19, for announcement and membership of the Committee as printed on p. 2 of the Beveridge Report.

<sup>3</sup> See Paper 3 of *Memoranda from Organisations* published as companion volume to the Beveridge Report, Cmd. 6405 of 1942. The quotation in this paragraph is from this Paper, p. 14.

## MAKING OF BEVERIDGE REPORT

criticised also the provision for medical treatment, both by general practitioners and in the hospitals. They pointed out that their hope of getting incidental examination of health insurance through the Royal Commission on Workmen's Compensation appointed in 1938 was being defeated; the employers had said that during the war they were too busy to give evidence, and in the middle of 1940 the Commission had suspended its work. The T.U.C. deputation of February 1941 were concerned primarily with health insurance, but they stressed the wider aspects of the problem as it presented itself to the ordinary man: "From the insured person's point of view the problem is how to provide an income when he loses his wages, and at present that central fact is dealt with by a whole lot of schemes purporting to deal with the same problem, but each providing a different kind of remedy." The Ministers receiving the deputation were sympathetic and promised action as rapidly as possible. Four months later, in June, their efforts materialised in the appointment of the Inter-Departmental Committee. The Government included workmen's compensation expressly in the Committee's terms of reference.

The personal background for me was that, since the beginning of 1941 I had held a position in the Ministry of Labour and National Service as Under-Secretary in charge of the departments concerned with Military Service, but that my welcome had run out in the circumstances described in Chapter XIII. The first person to mention to me the proposed inquiry into social insurance was Ernest Bevin. My recollection is that in telling me about it, he said that in his view the Committee of Inquiry should be essentially official in character, dealing with administrative issues rather than with issues of policy.

The Social Insurance Committee met for the first time on July 8, 1941, and asked each of the departments concerned to prepare a memorandum for the information of the Committee, giving two or three months for this purpose. They gave notice also of their existence, by Press notice and otherwise, to all organisations that might be interested, and invited memoranda of evidence by the end of September. The Committee then adjourned for the vacation, while I devoted my time to the Committee on Skilled Men in the Services.

### *2. Commissioning of Beveridge*

The survey of existing schemes by the departments was completed before the end of September. But I was occupied almost wholly on

## THROUGH WORLD WAR II

Skilled Men in the Services until the end of October, when the main Report on that subject was signed and presented. I continued to be active in regard to Skilled Men thereafter, and as late as November 24, 1941, I wrote to a friend: "I have only just begun to take up social insurance work seriously." Only one of the organisations invited to give evidence, namely the Association of Approved Societies, presented its statement by October, and the Committee held their first meeting for receipt of oral evidence, by seeing representatives of this Association, on November 26, 1941.

Meanwhile, I had been working at social insurance and on December 11, 1941, issued four memoranda of my own to the Committee, including one on "Basic Problems of Social Security with Heads of a Scheme." This memorandum contains all the essentials of the Beveridge Report as published. It begins by laying down the three fundamental assumptions—of a National Health Service, of Universal Children's Allowances, and of Maintenance of Employment—named in paragraph 301 of the Report. On these three assumptions, the memorandum outlines a scheme of Social Security providing for each member of the community basic provision appropriate to his needs in return for a single compulsory contribution. It lays down (as in paragraph 302 of the Report) that the principle of the scheme is to ensure for everyone income up to subsistence level in return for compulsory contributions, expecting him to make voluntary provision to ensure any income that he desires beyond this. The next paragraph names the seven different needs to be covered, substantially as in Table xvi of the Report.

Once this memorandum had been circulated, the Committee had their objective settled for them and discussion was reduced to consideration of means of attaining that objective. The implications of the memorandum of December 11 were rubbed in a week later by a memorandum dealing with the finance of social insurance by what I described as "some statistical short cuts." The circulation of these two memoranda produced an unexpected reaction. The Treasury, with other departments, was represented on the Social Insurance Committee. As soon as the heads of the Treasury saw the heads of my scheme, they realised that the Committee were going to deal, not with administrative detail, but with fundamental problems, and that the members of the Committee, being civil servants, could not, without consulting their Ministers, sign a Report answering the questions that would be asked of them. If they signed after consulting their Ministers, they would thereby commit the Ministers individually and the Government, before the Report had been



## MAKING OF BEVERIDGE REPORT

seen as a whole. The Treasury brought this problem to the notice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood. He sent for me and said that reconstruction of the Committee was unavoidable. The departmental representatives on the Committee must in future become advisers only, and would not sign the Report, however it emerged from the work of the Committee. The Chancellor added that it might be advisable to add to the Committee two or three other non-departmental representatives who would make and sign the Report with me. I did not welcome this suggestion, but could hardly reject it myself. Fortunately Arthur Greenwood, who had appointed the Committee, would have nothing to do with the suggestion of adding new members, and he contrived to get his way. On January 27, 1942, he wrote to me the letter printed in paragraph 40 of the Beveridge Report to the effect that henceforth the departmental representatives, that is to say, all members of the Committee other than myself, would become advisory to me. I should have the sole responsibility for settling the contents of the Report and for signing it.

The reconstruction of the Committee, reducing it from twelve members to one member with eleven advisers, was not announced at the time, and was not known to the public until the Report was published. It seems to me possible that the convenience of making no announcement about the change in the Committee was one of the considerations which enabled Arthur Greenwood to have his way against the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to resist the appointment of additional members. At any rate he got his way, as almost his last act as Minister for Reconstruction. On February 19 it was announced that the Government had been reconstructed and Arthur Greenwood left the War Cabinet to become Leader of the Opposition. Early in March reconstruction problems were placed in the hands of Sir William Jowitt as Paymaster-General. As might be expected, the reticence of the Government led to questions later. The following questions and answers of February 2, 1943, are a pleasant illustration of Parliamentary back-chat:

### BEVERIDGE COMMITTEE (SIGNING OF REPORT)

SIR JOHN MELLOR asked the Minister without Portfolio whether those who attended the Beveridge Committee for oral examination after 27th January 1942 were told of the decision of his predecessor communicated to the Committee on that date, that the Report would be signed by the Chairman alone?

## THROUGH WORLD WAR II

THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (SIR WILLIAM JOWITT). No, Sir. I understand, however, that the Chairman called the attention of witnesses to the fact that all his colleagues were civil servants and that while they would ask questions the witnesses should not seek to infer from the questions the views of the Ministers to whom these civil servants were responsible.

SIR J. MELLOR. When my right hon. and learned friend appears in Court does he not like to know whether the jury is going to function?

SIR WILLIAM JOWITT. If I were speaking the truth, the evidence I should give would be the same.

### 3. *The Committee at Work*

The Committee of Beveridge plus eleven advisers got to work on their new basis in the New Year. As a Committee we sat as a rule once a fortnight from January till the end of June to take oral evidence, allotting a day, a half-day, or an hour to each organisation seen according to its importance; the most important bodies—such as the Trades Union Congress, the National Conference of Friendly Societies and the companies and societies concerned with Industrial Assurance—we saw on more than one occasion. Between meetings for evidence we inserted meetings of the Committee alone for discussion of important questions. We made a break in our meetings in April, to release me for my side-show of Fuel Rationing, and again in July to release me for writing the first draft of my Report, but the end of July saw a spate of evidence-taking, as did the end of August. Altogether, as a full Committee we saw more than forty sets of witnesses, ending with the Insurance Unemployment Board on October 8, 1942.

Throughout this taking of evidence we presented ourselves as a Committee, with each member questioning in turn. I went so far as to warn the witnesses that they must not from the questions of my civil servant colleagues try to guess what the civil servants or the Ministers behind them were thinking. A verbatim note of the oral evidence was taken, but happily no one suggested that it should be published. We were able at all times to talk frankly and fruitfully off the record.

The first body to give evidence in the New Year was the Trades Union Congress. The Congress had been largely responsible for securing establishment of the Committee. They apologised for not having sent their memorandum before January, explaining this by the fact that most

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of them had been required to spend a good many weeks of 1941 in Russia. I welcomed them in the following words:

Let me just refer quite briefly to two paragraphs in your memorandum before I ask you to speak of it. As regards the first paragraph, there was no need to apologise for not being ready before. We realise that these matters are very important, and although we should have liked to see you before, we understand the reasons why we have not seen you until now. I would also like to refer to paragraph 8 where you speak of an opportunity for informal and frequent discussions with the Committee. Let me say that is a hope I share, and I hope you will not regard this as the last occasion when we shall meet: it certainly will not be: the ground we have to cover is very great and, if I may say so, having had a good deal of experience some 30 or 40 years ago in developing insurance schemes, very largely at that time with the help and consultation of the Trade Unions, I hope to repeat that experience again, and before we finish today I hope to have the chance of seeing when we can arrange to meet again.

I had, in fact, had occasion more recent than thirty years before for discussing social insurance problems regularly with the T.U.C., in my capacity of Chairman of the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee. Their social insurance expert, J. L. Smyth, and I met again as old friends, with a common interest in social security as a whole. The opening meeting in January 1942 was followed by many more, of frank discussion. In general my aim was to persuade the T.U.C. to let me treat all loss of earnings on similar lines, irrespective of its cause. In general they agreed with me, except in regard to industrial accident; that had been an employer's liability and while they were prepared now to make it part of contributory insurance, they felt that it should carry higher cash benefits. We reached in discussion a compromise which would, I believe, have been accepted finally if the Report had been acted on at once.

The essence of the compromise was that the initial rate of money benefit should be the same for every kind of interruption of earnings, whether through unemployment, or sickness, or industrial accident; only if incapacity through accident became prolonged or permanent should it attract a higher benefit, related to the earnings that had been lost. After an interview mainly devoted to this question, early in February, I got the T.U.C. representatives to agree in principle to discrimination between short and long term cases of incapacity through accident, as there was in several other countries. Though they still asked

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for a much shorter period at the flat lower rate than I came ultimately to recommend in my Report, a bargain was in sight. In practice, on this point as on others relating to industrial accident, my Report has been followed less than in other fields.

Apart from the T.U.C. the most important organisations concerned with the Committee's work were the National Conference of Friendly Societies and the companies and societies concerned with Industrial Assurance.

The National Conference of Friendly Societies gave oral evidence formally on February 25 when, for the first and last time, I was absent from the Committee through indisposition. We met again later on many occasions, notably at an informal meeting on April 3, followed by important correspondence, by further talk in May, and finally by a meeting at Oxford on August 22. In these discussions I was trying to bring the societies to the point of realising that the Approved Society system of unequal benefits in sickness for the same contribution could no longer be maintained; I wanted, with their help, to define the conditions on which it could be abolished with least harm to the Friendly Societies. The Industrial Assurance Companies and Societies also came into this discussion. They were interested in the Approved Society system. I was even more interested in them, and was set upon turning them from their bad ways into a public service.

All or most of those who came before us as witnesses had some special interest. But there was also a notable degree of agreement among them. I emphasised and illustrated this afterwards in one of my speeches on the Report:

The main feature of my Plan for Social Security is a unified comprehensive scheme of social insurance to be administered by one Department, to provide cash benefits adequate in amount and in time without a means test, at a flat rate of benefit in return for a flat rate of contributions. With this goes a comprehensive health service and a system of children's allowances. Having these features in mind, I suggest that some of you should read the memoranda submitted to my Committee by, say, the Association of Municipal Corporations, the Trades Union Congress, the Shipping Federation (which was the only employers' organisation to make definite general recommendations) and the National Council of Women of Great Britain. All these bodies, generally interested in social insurance and not in one side of it only, and other bodies of general interest, such as Political

## MAKING OF BEVERIDGE REPORT

and Economic Planning, put up proposals agreeing on practically all those main principles. Of course, there are differences both as between the different organisations and between what they said and my proposals. Since they differed among themselves, I could not agree with everything that all or any of them said. But if you will study what was said to my Committee by these outside organisations of general interest, such as I have named, you will see that my Report represents to a very large extent the greatest measure of common agreement in the views of those who have thought most seriously upon its problems. That is what I tried to make it. I tried to make a Beveridge Report which would really be the British people become articulate about what they want in the way of social security. I hope that to some extent I may have succeeded.<sup>1</sup>

We learned a great deal from our witnesses. But formal taking of evidence was a small part of our work. Each of my colleagues on the Committee was a first-rate expert in his own field. I spent hours in discussion with them, individually or in groups, of one problem after another. I set up sub-committees of them to deal with such questions as the machinery of administration. One of them, the Government Actuary, Sir George Epps, occupied a special position, in so far as he would in due course contribute under his own name a memorandum on the actuarial aspects of anything that I might propose.

The organisation of our meetings, formal and informal, and of our office was a test of our Committee Secretary, D. N. Chester, an academic in the War Cabinet Office, now a Fellow at Nuffield College. He came through the test with flying colours. The formal tribute which it fell to me, in lieu of the Committee, to pay to him in transmitting my Report to the Government was anything but a formality. The work of the Committee, with his hand on the wheel, went through like clock-work. But all my Civil Service colleagues in their own spheres were indispensable for our common task.

My colleagues, in their surveys made during the summer of 1941, had seen to it that I learned the facts about each service and had notice of the problems calling for solution, as each department saw them. I responded by sending out a stream of memoranda to them, springing hares for their chasing. Very often I would send a projected memorandum in draft to the departmental representative directly concerned before trying it on the Committee as a whole—ideas about workmen's

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Caxton Hall, March 3, 1943. Printed as chapter 13 in *The Pillars of Security*.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR II

compensation to R. R. Bannatyne of the Home Office, about industrial assurance to B. K. White as Industrial Assurance Commissioner, about health insurance or medical service to Hamilton Farrell of the Ministry of Health or Miss Muriel Ritson of the Department of Health for Scotland, and so on. The most frequent recipient of drafts from me was Sir George Epps, the Government Actuary; it was obvious from the beginning that much would turn on statistics and costs. The basic memorandum of December 11, 1941, which began the great adventure, went to him as a cock-shy nine days before; it was the product of a week-end at Oxford. This and other basic memoranda were discussed by the Committee in January and February. Even after the second or third of these meetings, I still paid lip-service to the idea that the Committee might lead to no more than correction of a few anomalies, and had my lip-service recorded in the minutes.

But my advisers did not want a mere administrative tidying of insurance any more than I did. Just before this I had an interchange of letters with one of the Committee, Muriel Ritson from Edinburgh, which may stand here for my relations with every one of them.

January 26, 1942.

I have to apologise for taking up the time of the Committee last week in the discussion on S.I.C. (42) 3. I know that my zeal for a scheme of reform of the Social Insurance Services which will be generally acceptable, is apt to outrun my discretion.

War travelling is also not conducive to lucidity of expression at 4 p.m. on the day after a night journey.

I shall let you have a note of the difficulties which appear to result from the introduction of a scheme of differential benefits based on a flat rate contribution and then the Committee need not be troubled further with my views. . . .

In order to avoid further misunderstanding may I add that my use of the term "practical politics" is meant only to indicate the necessity for securing that any Scheme of reform proposed will find favour with the average British citizen on the ground that it is reasonable and just. I admit, of course, that the House of Commons is the touchstone on which the reasonableness and justice of all such schemes must ultimately be based.

I am sorry if the line chosen for approach to the difficult questions of principle underlying a unified Scheme of Social Insurance should make it seem that Civil Servants are merely concerned with destructive

## MAKING OF BEVERIDGE REPORT

criticism and I would ask you to believe that that is not the spirit in which I have approached the work of the Committee.

January 28, 1942.

Very many thanks for your letter received today. Please do not think that there is the slightest reason for you to apologise for anything that you contributed to the discussion on our Committee, rather forgive me if I said anything that I should not have said, and please continue to speak your own mind absolutely freely on all occasions on the Committee.

I know myself, by experience, that the last thing that Civil Servants are is to be merely destructive, and what you in particular have done or said on the Committee I have appreciated extremely.

Please go on as you have been doing keeping me practical, but not being afraid of vested interests.

I was no doubt lucky in my colleagues. As there are good and bad fishes in the sea, so there are lively minds in the Civil Service and other minds not so lively. But none of the less live type had found their way to the Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services.

My advisers rejoiced in chasing to their doom hares sprung by others. The professional economists of the War Cabinet produced several hares which we thought too mechanical to deserve a run in the Report. One of these was a plan for putting the rate of social insurance benefit up and down according to the level of employment. I had invented too many such devices in the early days of unemployment insurance to have retained much faith in their practical value. I started another hare myself in proposing that rates of benefit should vary with the level of rents in different regions. I saw to it that this hare had a really good run, but my advisers would have none of it and I yielded in the end; the absence of this plan from my Report represents an outstanding victory of advisers over chairman. The Board of Education started a hare of a different kind by urging that allowances for children should be given wholly or mainly in kind. I felt able to scotch this animal myself and gave incidentally a short definition of social insurance:

I find it difficult to believe either in the practicability or the desirability of the State replacing parents altogether in regard to material welfare of children. Social insurance in a free country must, I think, to a large extent consist of putting people into a position to meet their responsibilities rather than removing their responsibilities entirely.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Maurice Holmes, August 27, 1942.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR II

But the memoranda and the ideas for reform did not originate only from the Chairman. Nearly every member of the Committee had some long-desired improvements to propose. Bannatyne of the Home Office was perhaps the most reforming of them all. "I believe you will succeed in lifting workmen's compensation out of its rut." So he wrote to me in his last letter before the Committee came to an end.

I celebrated its end on December 9, 1942, by a cocktail party in which all the Committee came to meet my newly affianced J., presented me with the original of the Low cartoon of November 20 showing Cripps coming out of the Cabinet Room and myself trundling many volumes in, and signed on the back, individually and committing themselves as fully as possible, a declaration of good wishes. The back of this cartoon bears thus the only Report made by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services of June 1941. This cocktail party was the high spot of a day which included a thirty-five-minute personal interview with H.M. the King, a vast luncheon at the Savoy with J. making her first public appearance with me, a meeting with the T.U.C. in the afternoon, at which they fell round our necks with enthusiasm for the Report, and after the Committee cocktails a dinner with the Liberal Party.

But this is to anticipate. I had been a civil servant myself, with a habit of producing memoranda, and I poured out documents now for study by my colleagues. I followed my basic memorandum of December 11 a month later by a full-scale discussion of "The Scale of Social Insurance Benefits and the Problem of Poverty." This showed that two causes between them accounted for practically all the acute poverty existing in Britain; the two causes were interruption or loss of earning power and failure to relate family income to family needs.

By this double redistribution of income through social insurance and children's allowances, acute poverty can be abolished at once; by no other means can it be abolished, in any measurable time, if ever.

I went on to argue from the existing inequalities of wages, with so many wage-earners far above want, that abolition of poverty was "within the financial power of the community."

Poverty could be abolished by a re-distribution of income within the working classes, without touching any of the wealthier classes at all.

I did not suggest, of course, that the wealthier classes should be left untouched.



## MAKING OF BEVERIDGE REPORT

My lecture to the Committee on the problem of poverty was followed by a note on Procedure, proposing among other things the setting-up of a Sub-Committee of Experts to advise on scales of benefit in relation to subsistence needs. This proved a fruitful suggestion. The Sub-Committee of Professor A. L. Bowley, Seeborn Rowntree, R. F. George, and Dr. H. E. Magee were appointed and made an invaluable report, though we failed to agree with them as to how the problem of widely varying rent should be treated. This was an issue on which I was converted first to one view and then to the opposite view by rival experts.

By the end of May I began to prepare for drafting the Report by shooting out memoranda to the Committee on particularly knotty points. There was one on May 29 on Benefit Rates and Subsistence Needs, several on June 1 dealing with administration, contribution conditions, and other outstanding questions, and finally one on June 16 on "Three Crucial Problems" including as the main problem "Transition to Uniform Adequate Pensions." The other crucial problems were that of funeral grants and of compensation to the staff that would be displaced. There came on June 16 yet another memorandum from me on benefit rates; on June 18 a list of all the principal changes now proposed, and on June 19 my thoughts on "Special Problems of Workmen's Compensation and Voluntary Insurance." Looking at my output of that time I wonder how I can ever have been out of the company of a shorthand-typist.

The Committee on June 23 had a field day by themselves, ranging over workmen's compensation, voluntary insurance, the basis of benefit and pension rates, and transition problems, with special reference to pensions and to funeral benefit. After that discussion, I felt able to write to the Minister of Reconstruction, Sir William Jowitt, to say that I was approaching the point of drafting the Report and hoped to circulate a first draft for consideration by my colleagues of the Committee on July 10.

I went away to Scotland for a week to do this drafting at Elie in Fife, where I was joined and advised continually by J. I was back in London before July 8, and the first draft of the Report was sent out to the Committee as promised, on July 10, 1942, with a request for observations by the end of August.

On return from Scotland I took up four critical arguments. One of these was with the Friendly Societies as to the terms of abolition of the Approved Society system. Another led to the issue to the Committee on August 20 of a 33-page memorandum on Industrial Assurance.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR II

This memorandum, in all essentials, is reproduced in the published Appendix B of the Report.

The third argument related to industrial accidents, where my aim of substituting contributory insurance for workmen's compensation as an employer's liability involved the greatest administrative change of all. Though we had settled the main issue with the T.U.C., many complicated and possibly contentious problems remained. I felt particularly lucky in my adviser here; Bannatyne had been a Toynbee resident like myself and was a social reformer in spirit. The closing argument on provision for industrial accidents was largely internal, between myself and my Committee member R. R. Bannatyne and his fellow-experts of the Home Office. But we had many consultations with outside interests, and at one point the Master of the Rolls, Lord Greene, who had had much to do with workmen's compensation problems, expressed an interest in our work. So in July I sent him my draft Report, and in addition to much sage advice on workmen's compensation I received a cheering slap on the shoulder for my general purpose.

August 10, 1942.

I have read your draft with the greatest interest and am returning it to you. If I may say so it is a document of outstanding merit and it does the heart good to find a big problem tackled in the big way. I can only hope that the Government when the time comes will have the necessary courage and vigour; and that it will not spoil the whole scheme by adopting some unsatisfactory compromise with the vested interests. Your argument for the abolition of the approved society system in Health Insurance is unanswerable. But they will fight like cats—as also will the insurance companies in the matter of workmen's compensation.

To this, thanking him for his kind words about the Report, I answered on August 12:

I am not without hope that it may make sufficient popular appeal to compel the Government to take it up, provided I can satisfy the Treasury that it is financially possible. I am at the moment engaged on a very interesting and friendly discussion with them on that point.

Trying to satisfy the Treasury on this point brought me to the fourth and most important of my critical issues. It was in the main an argument with Maynard Keynes.

I had enlisted Keynes's interest in the work of the Committee at an

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early stage, sending him in March 1942 my list of principal questions and my two basic memoranda of December 11 and January 16. He answered at once: "You have got a fascinating subject, and I should like to talk about it." After further study by him there came, on March 17, a heartening appreciation:

Meanwhile let me say that I have read your Memoranda which leave me in a state of wild enthusiasm for your general scheme. I think it is a vast constructive reform of real importance and am relieved to find that it is so financially possible. From rumours which had previously reached me, I feared that it was much more expensive.

In July the Treasury, and not Keynes alone, began to be interested, with all the chiefs, from Horace Wilson and Richard Hopkins downwards, coming into the game. There followed a series of discussions and interchange of notes, between Keynes, Robbins, Epps and myself, with the finance of the scheme coming ever more clearly to depend on what we did about pensions for those already at or near the pensionable age. The culmination of this was a meeting on August 12 at which I made what I spoke of afterwards as my deal with Keynes, and confirmed in a letter to him of August 20.

The gist of the deal was that Keynes promised to support my Report if I would keep the additional burden on the Treasury down to £100,000,000 a year for the first five years; after that, he said, the Treasury should have no difficulty in meeting rising charges. I found myself able to satisfy Keynes's condition for support, provided that I spread the introduction of adequate contributory pensions over a substantial period of transition. I wanted to do this in any case, and I had for a transition period an excellent precedent in New Zealand. It seemed to me right to make pensions as of right, like all other benefits in the scheme, genuinely contributory; for pensions there must be a substantial period of contribution. Those who were already nearing the pensionable age would have to be covered, and could rightly be covered, by assistance pensions subject to a means test. The total additional cost to the Exchequer and to rates in the first year of the scheme was reduced to £86,000,000, all of which resulted from the grant of children's allowances. In paragraph 292 of the Report I paid homage to Keynes's arguments for financial caution in the immediate aftermath of war.

To make the burden on the National Exchequer as light as possible at the outset of the scheme is in accord with the probable economic and political requirements. When hostilities end, the need for heavy

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expenditure from the National Exchequer will not end; it can decline only gradually as war commitments are liquidated and the permanence of peace becomes assured. Undertaking the future possibilities of the plan for pensions is an act of faith in the building up of the national income and of the resources from which national taxation must be drawn. There is no reason to lack that faith in the future, but in the immediate aftermath of the war there are strong reasons for keeping the hands of the State, as far as possible, free for expenditures which are as vital as social security, and cannot be undertaken by anyone except the State.

Finally, when the draft Report or portions of it were already on their way to the printers, came a long letter from Keynes, with arguments on particular points but with a general blessing.

After reading this further instalment of your Report, I feel confirmed in the feeling that I expressed the other day, that it is a grand document. You can scarcely expect that it will be adopted just as it stands, but it seems to me that you have now got it into an extremely workable shape, and I should hope that the major and more essential parts of it might be adopted substantially as you have conceived them.

Maynard Keynes and I, as this volume has shown, were often in controversy—about tariffs or the nature of economic science or population trends. Controversy never affected our friendship. I am glad to record our deal on social insurance as the last of our joint transactions. The deal depended on a long transition period for pensions as of right. That has not been applied in practice. Our deal went west. And other things of more importance may have gone with it.

I was sorry at the time that in the Report itself I could not say in words of my own choice how much my Civil Service colleagues had done. In the last stage of all—during October 1942—my Treasury representative wrote to me, under instructions, to ask for changes in what I had proposed to say in my Report about them; the matter “had been referred to higher authority,” which meant the Chancellor or some other politician. One of the other members of the Committee, a civil servant for the moment only, expressed to me some disgust at this Treasury letter. But the issue was not one to quarrel about. I found an agreed formula for the Report itself. When the applause to the Report began, I took the first chance open to me of making plain, in my own words, how much the Report owed to the knowledge and spirit of my colleagues.

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I did so to an audience of civil servants on January 28, 1943. Soon after, in an address at Caxton Hall on March 3,<sup>1</sup> I returned to the theme:

There is another remark often made about the Beveridge Report, and that is that the Report is a one-man Report. Now, it is true that the Report is signed by one man only—myself—so that I am the only person that can be hanged for it. No one else can be brought to book for anything whatever that is said in it. No one else is committed to it. But it is not true that the Report was made, or could have been made, by one man sitting and thinking and studying by himself. I had sitting with me a Committee representing all the departments concerned with the problems under consideration—all the best experts in the Government service—and very good experts they are. They acted as a Committee in examining witnesses, in discussion and in criticism. They acted as my technical advisers. Without their help in these ways the Report would have been a very different and much inferior document. I alone am responsible for all that it proposes, just as a Minister alone is responsible for everything that is done in his department. I was like a temporary Minister for devising this particular piece of post-war reconstruction; I could not have done the job otherwise.

Real Ministers would not be able to do much without their Departments. It has often been noticed how different are the speeches which politicians make when they are Ministers, with all the knowledge and ability of their Departments behind them, and the speeches which they make in opposition when they have nothing to trust to but their own intelligence and knowledge. Those opposition speeches sometimes are very flimsy and dull by comparison with the wealth of knowledge, the grasp of the subject and even the humour that is displayed by Ministers sitting on top of their Departments. Though it is the same mouth out of which the speech comes on each occasion.

### 4. *Side-Shows of a Reporter, including Marriage*

As has been stated, for the first five months after the setting up of the Social Insurance Committee, I was occupied mainly with work on my other Committee of Skilled Men in the Services, and I went on doing some work with this Committee until the following March. It was not

<sup>1</sup> Printed as chapter 13 of *The Pillars of Security*.

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my only diversion from social insurance between appointment of the Committee in June 1941 and publication of the Beveridge Report on December 1, 1942.

In September 1941 there was a short interruption, while I made an inquiry at the request of the Minister of Labour into a labour difficulty at Sheffield. In March and April came a greater interruption, through my being asked by Hugh Dalton, as President of the Board of Trade, to invent a Fuel Rationing Scheme. I was practically full-time on this from March 17 to April 19, 1942.

I became also a member of the Advisory Committee established by Sir William Jowitt as Minister for Reconstruction. It was at a meeting of this Committee in June that I invented the "Five Giants," of Want, Disease, Squalor, Ignorance and Unemployment, whom I paraded publicly for the first time in an address on Maintenance of Employment to the Engineering Industries Association on July 30, 1942, and who appeared again in paragraph 456 of the Beveridge Report.<sup>1</sup>

Contributions to the Press and ordinary broadcasts dropped off after March 1942. But I continued as an active member of the Brains Trust, and I made occasional speeches—to the Engineering Industries Association, as stated above, on July 30, 1942; to the Rochester Diocesan Conference on November 10, 1942, on "The Five Christian Standards" (printed as chapter 4 of *The Pillars of Security*), and finally to the Fabian Society on November 22, 1942.

All the time I was still Master of University College with the Master's Lodgings on my hands, and a fluctuating stream of inhabitants sharing its space with me. But by the beginning of 1942 I was mainly alone, and J., who from her own house in Headington had been at hand to help, had gone to Scotland to stay in Edinburgh with her brother and sisters. One day in March my two servants who had promised to see me through for six months told me they wanted to leave me for munitions work and I decided to shut the Lodgings altogether. The next day the servants said they wanted to stay and for a short time I kept them. But in April Wycombe Abbey Girls' School found themselves turned out by the War Office with practically no notice at all. Having arranged for the teaching of their girls at Headington, they needed desperately to find a place for their Sixth-Formers, who were taking their School Certificates, to live in during the School Term. So for three months,

<sup>1</sup> The address to the Engineering Industries' Association was printed as chapter 5 of *The Pillars of Security*.

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from April to the end of July, they occupied my Master's Lodgings, where I reserved three rooms for myself.

Here I still took refuge from London at week-ends, usually to brew a memorandum there but sometimes for better occupation. James Ching volunteered as his war work to give us Sunday recitals of Bach in University hall. I described this to him once as "an hour and a half of sanity" in a mad world.

With these side-shows there was a development in my personal affairs. My cousin, David Mair, J.'s first husband, had been bombed in Hendon, and, apart from that, had long been in poor health; he was now staying with their daughter, Marjorie Gwilt, in Scotland. In the summer of 1942 his illness took a fatal turn and on July 21 he died. It was clear that J. and I, colleagues and friends for thirty years and more, would come together wholly. At the end of October J. and I told her family, to their great delight, that we contemplated getting married about the end of the year. On November 13, I told my College. On November 16, J. came south to stay with her son Philip, at Pinner, with a view to marriage on December 15.

I had the business of seeing if William Temple would marry us, but when I explained that my father and mother had not baptised me in infancy and that I had not made good their neglect, he said that, with all the good will in the world, he could not perform the actual marriage. He would do everything short of that. In other words, if we would get formally married by a Registrar, he would conduct a service for us in any church in the country that we asked for, not excluding St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey; if we chose either of these, he had no doubt that they would be full. We decided on the bomb-ruined church just south of Caxton Hall where the Registrar worked. The tower of this church had been left standing and was kept still for services. There, after we had made our way through mobs of spectators and photographers to the Registrar, William Temple conducted the service and preached an admirable sermon at us, with an audience of family and close friends, less than twenty altogether.

### *5. Birth of the Report*

The members of my Committee made their observations on my first draft by the end of August. We went on seeing witnesses and, among other hearings, gave two days to oral evidence in Edinburgh on July 31 and August 31. In September I dashed off to Boat of Garten for a

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final bout of writing, particularly on industrial insurance, with the help of J. to advise and of her grandson John Gwilt to play golf with me in the intervals.

All October I was back in London, getting the Report to the printer, having meetings on it with the Committee, sending out eleventh-hour and fifty-ninth-minute ideas to my colleagues; my last two memoranda as Chairman are both dated October 29—on Compensation for Displaced Staff and on the Application of the New Scales to Existing Cases. I had some discussion also as to form and price of publication. The publishers of the Penguin books said they would like to issue the Report as a Penguin and I felt bound to put this suggestion to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, then Captain Crookshank; it would help to bring the Report to public notice. I found Captain Crookshank almost offended at the suggestion and it was turned down finally by the Chancellor himself. But I think it may have had something to do with the modest price charged to the public for the Report and its Appendices, 2s. for 300 closely printed pages with a total of about 200,000 words. I produced personally about two-thirds of those words: the Report itself, Appendix D on Industrial Insurance, and the substance of Appendix E on the Administrative Costs of Various Forms of Insurance. My 140,000 words were dictated largely in interstices of Committee meetings and interviews, with week-ends and two off periods in Scotland—perhaps a month of free time altogether. The largest other contributors were the Government Actuary dealing with the finance of the scheme in Appendix A, the secretary of the Committee, D. N. Chester, who with the help of the departments wrote the Survey of Existing Schemes in Appendix B, and Frank Pakenham contributing comparisons with other countries in Appendix F; I retrieved him from the Board of Trade at the end of June 1942 to help me on this and other matters. A companion volume of Memoranda from Organisations with nearly 150,000 words on 244 pages was published simultaneously and was sold at the same price of 2s.

By November 7, I had finished all the first proofs. On November 13, from the Reform Club, I reported to J. "in the last letter that I expect to write to you for some time" that I was still wrestling with the last stages of book-proof. "Government Actuary very slow but doing his best." I signed the Report actually on November 20, though it was not all delivered as early as that to the Government. It was laid on the table of the House of Commons at three o'clock on December 1 and appeared on December 2 in the papers. The gross cost of preparation of the Report was estimated officially at £4,625, of which £3,150 represented the esti-



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inated cost of printing and publishing the Report and the accompanying volume of Memoranda from Organisations.

Meantime the public and the Government had been getting news about my work in various ways. It was clear to the T.U.C., to the Friendly Societies and to many others who had come to give evidence and to discuss questions with us, that something large was afoot. Anticipation of this could not help spreading to their friends; the subject of our inquiry interested every man and woman in the country or serving in the forces abroad. Before the end of October, Parliament, the Press and the public were all agog. I did nothing to seek publicity—I was far too busy for that—but publicity rushed upon me. Early in November there came, among other things, demands for exclusive photographs for America and elsewhere, an offer which I did not accept of what seemed then a fantastically high fee of 200 guineas from a Sunday paper for an article, and requests to which I did not agree to record talks and be filmed for cinema-showing on publication. I was rash enough, on November 16, to see a reporter of the *Daily Telegraph*, which announced next day that, in an exclusive interview, I had said that my Report would take the country half-way to Moscow. I had not said anything of the sort, and I sent an immediate correction to the *Daily Telegraph*. But the episode led, among other things, to an anxious letter to me from Stafford Cripps, to a debate in Parliament, and to an inquiry by the National Union of Journalists as to charges said to have been made against the reporter in Parliament. As between the journalists and myself, all ended happily. The Hon. Secretary of their branch wrote to me his personal opinion that I was the person with best ground for complaint. The *Daily Telegraph* gave my Report when published a particularly good show and an admirable leader for which I thanked them. I have wondered often how and where the phrase about half-way to Moscow came to be born. It certainly was not used by me, and from what the reporter wrote to me privately I suspect that it was not used by her.

All became well between the Press and public and myself. But this episode led undoubtedly to a worsening of relations between the Government and myself. I received a severe letter on behalf of the Cabinet by Sir William Jowitt against premature publicity, to which I sent a suitably firm rejoinder, denying the facts which he had assumed without asking me.

The nearer the Report came to publication, the more I was in disgrace with the Government, or rather with all the Government except one Minister. Till two days before publication they planned to give the

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Report as little publicity as they could contrive. The Minister who took a different view was for this purpose the one that mattered. He was Brendan Bracken, the Minister of Information.

One night when I had gone to Pinner to dine with J. and her son and daughter-in-law the telephone rang for me and I heard the voice of Brendan Bracken cooing to me down the telephone, to say that the whole attitude about publicity for my Report was altered. So far from trying to suppress it, he had now a decision to give it the maximum of publicity possible. Would I come to a Press Conference under his Chairmanship on the late afternoon of December 1 at the Ministry of Information in the Macmillan Hall? Would I broadcast at 9.15 that night a Postscript about the Report for which the lines would be cleared to the whole world? And so on, and so on. Brendan Bracken, as Minister of Information, having looked at the Report, had realised its publicity value.

The opening and the two closing paragraphs of the broadcast in which I introduced the Report to listeners ran as follows:

The Atlantic Charter, among other aims, speaks of securing for all "improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security." The Security Plan in my Report is a plan for turning the last two words "social security" from words into deeds, for securing that no one in Britain willing to work, while he can, is without income sufficient to meet at all times the essential needs of himself and of his family. That plan hasn't yet been considered by Government or Parliament. What I am speaking about is simply the proposals which I have made. . . .

The Plan, as I have set it out briefly, is a completion of what was begun a little more than thirty years ago when Mr. Lloyd George introduced the National Health Insurance and Mr. Winston Churchill, then President of the Board of Trade, introduced Unemployment Insurance. The man who led us to victory in the last war was the Minister responsible for Health Insurance. The Minister who more than thirty years ago had the courage and imagination to father the scheme of Unemployment Insurance, a thing then unknown outside Britain, is the man who is leading us to victory in this war; I'd like to see him complete as well the work that he began in social insurance then.

But this is only my personal hope. What I have been telling you about is simply my proposals to the Government. The Government

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are not committed in any way to anything that I have said. They've only just seen my Report, and you won't expect them to make up their minds—they oughtn't to make up their minds—without full consideration. But I hope that the Government and Parliament and you will like the Security Plan, when you have all had time to consider it, and will adopt it. Having begun to work on this problem of social security myself more than thirty years ago, having lived with it for the past eighteen months and discussed it with all the people who know most about it, I believe that this Plan or something like it is what we need. It's the first step, though it is one step only, to turning the Atlantic Charter from words into deeds.<sup>1</sup>

I could hardly have made it plainer that the future of the Report depended on the view that the Government might take of it after full consideration. I did my best to win the Prime Minister to be my friend, as he had been in our youth.

So the Beveridge Report was born. The commissioning of the inquiry through which it came to birth was due to the driving force of the Trades Union Congress. The appointment of the Inter-Departmental Committee took the Government four months, from February to June 1941.

The making of the Report, after the departmental representatives had presented their memoranda, took me twelve months, from November 1941 to November 1942, including consideration of oral and written evidence and repeated discussion with all important outside interests, with Government departments and within the Committee itself. These twelve months were not free of other work.

The making of the Report would have been impossible without my Committee of first-rate advisers. The publicity for the Report made itself through the universal interest of private citizens in security. The outside help in publicity came through Brendan Bracken, who as Minister of Information had realised what a magnificent export to other countries the Report could be. It appeared later that the Government had not yet decided how far the Report was good for consumption at home or by our fighting men and women overseas.

The making of the Report by one man disguised as a Committee, one man with the advice of all the departmental experts, was an un-

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *The Pillars of Security*, chapter 6, as given in Home Service on December 2, 1942. This is substantially the same as the broadcast of the night before in the Empire Service.

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precedented departure from former methods of investigation. It came about by accident and it has not been repeated. But I wonder sometimes whether the precedent might not be worth following again.

I had undertaken the Chairmanship of the Committee with reluctance. I found the work there as happy as anything in my life, with the maximum of interest for the minimum of time spent in overcoming dullness or obstruction. Making the Beveridge Report was in theory a one-man show, but in practice a pooling of free minds.

Making the Beveridge Report was continuous undiluted delight, for it brought continuous companionship with a picked group of men and women without power but seeking to make a better world by influence based on knowledge. When the Report had been made it passed from such people into the hands of men exercising or seeking political power. This proved to be a different and less pleasing world.

## Chapter XV

### BEVERIDGE BOOM AND BOYCOTT

What I planned to do in life has again and again been prevented by events beyond my control, yet on each occasion I found something else worth doing.

Farewell Address to Undergraduates in University  
College, Oxford, March 11, 1945.

#### 1. *Public Reception of Report: the Boom*

THE public interest in my Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services had been manifest long before the Report was published. So also had the uneasiness of the Government, both as to the extent of the public interest and as to what the Report might contain. In the event, all reasonable expectations as to reception of the Report were surpassed in both directions.

The public boom in the Report was overwhelming. I became at a blow one of the best-known characters in the country. As one American commentator put it: "Sir William, possibly next to Mr. Churchill, is the most popular figure in Britain today." As another American commentator put it: "Sir William is not a good speaker, but he can over-fill any hall in England." A Gallup Poll of public opinion based on sample interviews everywhere was taken in the second week after publication of the Report and yielded unprecedented results. "Nineteen in every twenty adults had heard of the Beveridge Report at the time of the Survey. . . . There was overwhelming agreement that the Beveridge Plan should be put into effect."

One of the pleasantest features of the boom was that, though my name and features became known to everybody through illustrated papers and films, I remained a private citizen going about in omnibuses and third-class compartments; I was not a functionary with an escort.

More than once I caught young women surreptitiously sketching me as they sat opposite me in the train between Oxford and Paddington; if I liked the looks of the young woman, as I generally did, I asked to be shown the result and autographed it for her. Walking along Regent Street one day on the way to my Bruton Street office, I was picked up

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by a young Palestinian officer home on leave, who told me that his platoon were thinking of me as the next Prime Minister. The same idea occurred to taxi-men driving me past Downing Street; next time they hoped to drive me into Downing Street, not past it. Walking one day through St. James's Park on my way to deliver a speech somewhere, I met an ill-dressed man who came up to me. I thought he was going to beg of me, but he wanted only to put a question. "Pardon me, Sir," he said, "are you Mr. Churchill?" He must have recalled seeing my face in a photograph and he connected it with the best-known name. No doubt, being full of my speech, I was looking important.

The public boom in the Report was not confined to Britain or the British troops abroad. My friend Mrs. Eugene Meyer of the *Washington Post*, when at last I did manage to get a copy to her by the Embassy bag, cabled to me on December 9 that the effect over there was electrifying. A. D. Lindsay, just returned from a visit to America, wrote to me on December 24 that he had found universal interest in the Report all over the United States, and that President Roosevelt had talked of getting it made into a congressional document and having a million copies distributed. Though this did not happen, the British Government arranged with Macmillan's in New York for an American edition to be printed at top speed and netted \$5,000 for the Treasury.

American interest in the Report led almost at once to suggestions that I should cross the Atlantic to explain it. Early in December 1942, Harold Butler, Minister in charge of Information Services in Washington, cabled to Brendan Bracken an invitation, from the American Federation of Labour and the Congress of Industrial Organisations jointly, to address a dinner in the States on Social Security. Butler added that he thought "acceptance would help Anglo-American relations through the Labour movement here." I expressed my readiness to go, provided my wife went with me, starting at any time from January 7 onwards, but Brendan Bracken urged postponement, in view of the difficulty of transport arrangements on the Atlantic: "I am told that if you went to America before February, we could not guarantee that you might not be marooned in that country or elsewhere on the way for many weeks. I suggest that since America will always be eager to hear you, you should wait a little until the early spring." There followed at the end of December a cable from Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Foundation which in due course led to my wife and myself sailing for America in the *Queen Mary* on May 2, and enjoying the experiences which she will describe in a book of her own.

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Another feature of the boom was that I came to be treated as a Universal Aunt, with a correspondence both immense and peculiar.

There were any number of people wishing to know just where they would stand in respect of pensions or benefit or children's allowances, on the assumption that my plan went through; they had to be told that my plan was no longer in my hands. There were others who wished merely to greet me, in prose or in verse:

At last there is a saint on earth  
An angel he would be  
If only he could have his will  
And make the Commons pass his Bill.

So sang an old-age pensioner of Plymouth.

There were others who wished to help me with ideas. One gentleman of Burslem, having supplied me with a string of great thoughts ("Today is Yesterday, but alas! Today is also Tomorrow"), took care to give me his telephone numbers, by day and by night, in case I should need at any hour to ring him up for more thoughts. Another correspondent engaged in youth service put to me a question often put to him about me: "Are all his great social reforms prompted by his Christian beliefs?" He had to be told to my regret that, as I was not brought up a member of any church, my social proposals could not be attributed to my Christian beliefs: "But I believe they are in accord with the teaching of Christianity and they do, in fact, receive widespread support from leaders of all the churches." Others sought to help me, and through me the world, in practical ways. A Brighton friend sent me a device patented by himself for removing baking dishes from the oven without burning one's hands. A Suffolk friend had invented a Policeman's Phone Kiosk, to appear like a huge copper, and wrote to me more than once to bespeak help in getting it into production; I never felt sure in what sense he used the term copper.

But many, perhaps most, of my correspondents, just wanted to tell Aunt about themselves and their families. "May I draw your attention to the conditions I have to live under," began a lady from Golders Green, and told me the birthday, wages, pocket money and height of her adopted son. "It seems most thoughtless on my part to be writing to you now but if I do not, it will be too late." So began an old dear of eighty from Pembroke, who had reared eight children, lost her eldest in India during World War I, had three grandsons serving in World War II, and was now reduced reluctantly

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to "sponging on my unmarried daughter, who is not remarkably strong."

Please forgive me, do not even trouble to reply by letter, but give the matter your kindest consideration and see what can be done for those who have not been employees, who have not paid into the National Health Insurance but need financial help badly.

Nor was I an Aunt to Britain only. Shortly after the end of the European war I received a request from an employee of the town council of Ewijndrecht in Holland that I should obtain and send to him two sets of bicycle tyres, so that he might perform more effectively his work for the council, which was of a social nature and involved going large distances:

Formerly I used for this purpose a bicycle, but due to lack of tyres it is unusable. As you know the railways in Holland are nearly not by use.

My correspondent went on to answer the question why he did not buy the tyres in Holland, by explaining that they were not for sale except fraudulently at a price beyond him.

I earn very low wages. Moreover I have to support my family. I am a poor man.

Obviously a nice and honest man. I wish that I could have helped him.

At almost the same moment I found myself being asked to consider two articles on housing and home-making from a woman doctor in Tel Aviv. The doctor described herself as "one of the countless people in Jewish Palestine who feel indebted to you for your ingenious conception of a peaceful way to real social ascent."

Soon after publication of the plan support from organisations of all kinds came pouring in. The National Council of Labour, representing the T.U.C., the Labour Party and the Co-operative Union, approved unanimously in December the principles laid down in the Beveridge Report and called upon the Government to introduce the necessary legislation at an early date. A number of young Conservative Members of Parliament formed themselves into a group to secure adoption of my proposals; Lord Hinchingsbrooke, as leader of these "Tory Reformers," sent me once a book of their aims generally with the inscription: "To W. H. B. who told the soldier at a critical time one of the things he was



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fighting for." The British Council of Churches in February issued a statement expressing belief "that Christian people should and will welcome the proposals of the Beveridge Report as being in accord with Christian principles." The list of such expressions of public opinion could be made indefinitely long.

### 2. *Government Reception of Reporter : the Boycott*

While the British people and the free world outside Britain were applauding the Beveridge Report, the Government of Britain, other than the Minister of Information, showed to the Report an attitude of marked reserve and to its author an attitude which developed from ignoring him into boycott. The full story of this contrast is too long for this chapter; it will be told by J. in her volume. Here I speak of it only as it illustrates the theme of my volume and the ways of persons exercising power.

On return from my honeymoon in Scotland I began to receive suggestions that I should enter Parliament with a view to pressing forward the adoption of my Report. The most definite was a proposal signed by leading citizens of all parties that I should stand as an independent candidate for a seat then vacant at Watford. This seemed to me to call for consultation with the Prime Minister, if I could get it. So I wrote to him on January 30, 1943:

Can you spare me a few minutes of your time at any time in the near future? Suggestions are being made to me which if I accept them may affect my possible relations to the Government and Government work and on which therefore I am reluctant to take any decision till I have told you about them and have sought your advice, if you are so kind as to give it to me, as to how I can best help the Common Cause.

Of course, apart from my immediate problems I would like the chance of a word with you about the "magic of averages" in relation to social security.

The answer came that the Prime Minister would like to see me some time but was too busy at that time.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Churchill was very busy when my letter was written; I could hardly have chosen a less convenient moment for presenting my Report. He left on January 12, 1943, for the Casablanca Conference with Franklin Roosevelt. When the Conference ended on January 24 with its demand for unconditional surrender by the Germans,

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he went on to Adana to see the Turkish President and came back by Cyprus, Cairo, Tripoli and Algiers, to report to the House of Commons on these travels on February 11. Then he caught a chill which developed into pneumonia. From February 19 to 25, as he records, "there is a blank in my flow of minutes."<sup>1</sup>

Into the period of this illness fell a three-day debate in the House of Commons on the Beveridge Report. The debate began on February 16, on a motion by Arthur Greenwood welcoming the Report in general terms. Greenwood's speech made clear what he meant by welcome: "The people of the country have made up their minds to see the plan in its broad outline carried into effect, and nothing will shift them"; he called on the Government accordingly to begin implementing the plan "without a day's unnecessary delay." The speeches on behalf of the Government, on the first two days, by John Anderson as Lord President of the Council and Kingsley Wood as Chancellor of the Exchequer, made many members of the House see red. They vented their feelings by moving an amendment on the third day to express dissatisfaction with the policy of the Government, as shown in those speeches. Herbert Morrison, on this day, as third speaker for the Government, put a better face on their policy, but he, like the others, made plain that the Government were in no way committed to the plan; it was open to reconsideration on financial grounds. In spite of Herbert Morrison, the amendment was pressed to a division which became of historic importance politically.

The background of the Government's attitude in this debate of February 1943 was known to a few people only at that time. It has been revealed now in two notes of the Prime Minister to the Cabinet printed as an Appendix in Volume IV of the *Second World War*. The first note, of January 12, 1943, the day of Mr. Churchill's departure for Casablanca, deprecates promises about post-war conditions including the Beveridge plan to abolish want. The second note, of February 14, is an instruction binding Government speakers in the forthcoming debate to refrain from binding themselves to the plan of the Beveridge Report or the expenditure involved; it stresses the need for financial caution. Neither of these notes could have been written or advised by anyone who had taken time to learn, either from the Report itself or from its author, how far I had gone, in my deal with Keynes, to provide a safe financial basis for my proposals.

During this February J. and I saw Lloyd George on more than one occasion. He came specially to London in the first instance, to advise

<sup>1</sup> *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, p. 651.

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me against standing for Parliament against the Coalition. He was confident that Mr. Churchill, who had brought me in to deal with unemployment thirty years before, would adopt my Report in substance, and he urged me to do nothing to jeopardise new alliance with him. I accepted this advice and, even without hearing from the Prime Minister, I decided against trying for Parliament then. After seeing my Watford friends I wrote to them in February that I was delighted at the reason given for their invitation—that they believed that a great majority of the people desired adoption of the Social Security Plan set out in my Report. But I was sure that it would be wrong for me to accept their invitation. "Standing as an Independent candidate against a Government candidate . . . would have been justified only if I assumed, what I have no grounds whatever for assuming, that the Government had in any way reached a conclusion unfavourable to my Report."

But when the debate of February 16 to 18 came, with the Government's attitude revealed, Lloyd George came from Churt to vote for the Labour amendment; it was his last vote in Parliament. He was, I think, inclined to regret his advice about Watford.

The Tory Reformers led by Lord Hinchingsbrooke had put down an amendment to Arthur Greenwood's colourless motion, pressing for immediate appointment of a Minister of Social Security. They tried hard but in vain to be allowed to move this amendment, and one or two of them spoke strongly for definite action on the Beveridge Report. But when it came to voting on the Labour amendment on February 18 the Tory Reformers, like the rest of the Conservatives, felt bound to go into the lobby for the Government. There they found the Labour and Liberal Ministers and hardly anyone else of those parties. I had nothing to do with this debate or with the moving of the Labour amendment. But, after this debate, the Government boycott of me became formal and explicit.

The Government set up a Committee of officials to examine my proposals, but declined to say who these people were. I heard nothing more from Mr. Churchill as to my request to see him. When on March 18 Mrs. Cazalet-Keir asked him in Parliament whether the Government had consulted Sir William Beveridge on the setting up of new machinery for implementing the recommendations of his Report, she got her answer in two words: "No, Sir." The Member persisted—and got the same answer a second time:

**MRS. KEIR.** In view of the fact that the Government have accepted the large majority of the Beveridge proposals, would it not be wise

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to consult the author on the best methods of implementing his proposals?

THE PRIME MINISTER. No, Sir.

MR. GRANVILLE. In view of the fact that the newspapers report that the Prime Minister is to make a broadcast, will the right hon. Gentleman take the opportunity of making his own views on the Beveridge Report known to the nation?

THE PRIME MINISTER. I hope I may be allowed to make my own broadcast.

The Prime Minister made his broadcast three days later. He contrived to mention both social insurance and Sir William Beveridge without suggesting any connection between them and without naming the Beveridge Report:

I personally am very keen that a scheme for the amalgamation and extension of our present incomparable insurance system should have a leading place in our Four Years' Plan. I have been prominently connected with all the schemes of national compulsory organised thrift from the time when I brought my friend Sir William Beveridge into the public service thirty-five years ago when I was creating the labour exchanges, on which he was a great authority, and when with Llewellyn Smith I framed the first unemployment insurance scheme.<sup>1</sup> The prime parent of all national insurance schemes is, of course, Mr. Lloyd George. I was his lieutenant in those distant days and afterwards it fell to me, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, eighteen years ago, to lower the pensions age to sixty-five and to bring in the widow and orphans. The time is now ripe for another great advance, and anyone can see what large savings there will be in the administration once the whole process of insurance has become unified, compulsory and national. There is a real opportunity for what I once called "bringing the magic of averages to the rescue of the millions." Therefore you must rank me and my colleagues as strong partisans of national compulsory insurance for all classes for all purposes from the cradle to the grave.

Immediately after the February debate I made one or two attempts to open communications again with the Government which had commissioned my Report. I had met Herbert Morrison in the lobby during the debate and he had said something to me about making progress

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 82 *seq.* above for comment on this sentence.

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if one could damp down unreasonable demands; in his speech he had spoken of me warmly: "The country and the Government are therefore under a debt of gratitude to the Report and to the outstanding public servant who was the architect of this great document." I thought it reasonable to send him in advance notes of the first speech on the Report that I had to make after the debate—at Caxton Hall on March 3. I expressed the hope that he would find them reasonable:

I have only to add that if you think that there is anything further that I can do either formally or informally to help to an agreed settlement which really does deal with Want, I'll be very happy to do so and, of course, I am always at your disposal (till I go to America) to explain any points in my proposals on which you want to ask further questions.

But Herbert Morrison was not in charge of the Government attitude to me, and no interview followed this letter.

I was due to produce an article, later in the month, in the *Observer*, comparing my Report with what the Government had said in the debate. I sent this in advance to John Anderson, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and went to see him to make sure that I wrote nothing unfair. I found him unforthcoming and formal.

So I gave up the chase of reconciliation. I agreed after a decent interval, in October 1943, to become President of the Social Security League which had been founded by others six months before to make propaganda for my plan. I turned myself almost wholly to a new task—to the third and most important of the three Assumptions named in my Report—Assumption C, "Maintenance of Employment, that is to say, avoidance of mass unemployment."

### 3. *I turn to Assumption C*

The ink of my signature on the Social Insurance and Allied Services Report was hardly dry before I started on my next Report. Two days after the Savoy luncheon of December 9 I went to Manchester to make two speeches; neither of them practically contained anything about social insurance; they were both concerned with Assumption C. I returned to Oxford to open next day a Nuffield Conference on the Problem of Employment. While I was waiting to begin, there sprang into my mind the phrase which became my title: *Full Employment in a Free Society*.

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For my first meeting of the New Year, on January 19 at Plymouth, I took as my subject "Freedom from Want and Idleness." I had, of course, to say something, at Plymouth and elsewhere, about the Beveridge Report already published, but in writing on February 7 to Raymond Fosdick of the Rockefeller Foundation to confirm a cable of acceptance of the Foundation's invitation to visit the United States, I included the following paragraph:

Generally, while I am still mildly interested in my own proposals for Social Insurance and Allied Services. I am much more interested in the much more important problems of maintenance of employment (Assumption C of my Report), of the organisation of industry, and of international trade and international collaboration generally. From this point of view I should like to take, if possible, opportunities of making contacts not only with those concerned with Social Insurance and not only with those engaged in the Administration, but with people of different political and economic views from the Administration both as to international relations after the war and as to economic policy generally.

This paragraph is a confirmation of what Llewellyn Smith had said to me many years before with some peevishness, during Ministry of Munitions days, namely that I was always wanting to do something new and was uninterested in carrying on with what had been started already.

In March it became clear to me that the Beveridge Report was no longer my concern; my old love was off with me, and I should now have time for my new love of Maintenance of Employment. I had some talk about this with Brendan Bracken, and my records show that I had also a talk with Clement Attlee on March 17, but this did not lead to any co-operation with the Government in further work. I decided to go ahead on my own, with the help of funds provided for me anonymously by three friends. Today I can happily break their anonymity; they were Kenneth Lee, David Astor, and Edward Hulton. On April 8 I announced my inquiry, with an office established at 33 Bruton Street. I collected a first-rate team of consultants, who took the place, as far as possible, of the civil servants with whom I had made the Beveridge Report. These consultants, in the main, asked to remain anonymous, but today I can break through their anonymity also. They were Joan Robinson, Barbara Wootton, Nicholas Kaldor, E. F. Schumacher, and Frank Pakenham, all first-rate economists, with a former civil servant friend of mine from the Board of Trade, H. F. Carlill, who came in as administrative critic and

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ordinary man. Having started the office I went off almost at once to America. Serious work on my second Report did not begin for me till the following October.

Unexpectedly, my turning to a new Report gave the Coalition Government a new opportunity of boycott, and they seized it with both hands.

I knew many officials in many different departments. In starting to study employment I got into touch with some of them, in particular Sir Wilfrid Eady, formerly of the Ministry of Labour and now in the Treasury, and G. L. Watkinson, of the Board of Trade. Eady I had known of old when, in the great depression between the wars, he had been set to help J. H. Thomas to cure unemployment; he had just written to me an enthusiastic though personal letter about Social Security. Watkinson I had found first-rate to work with on Fuel Rationing; he received formal permission from his Minister, Hugh Dalton, to discuss employment problems with me, and with this permission he began to attend meetings of my Technical Committee of consultants.

Desire to consult on common problems was not confined to me. Early in October 1943 the Treasury asked me to confer with some of their leading people on the organisation of the economic work of the Government. I had a long talk with my old friend James Barlow and others, including Dingle Foot, on October 13, when I outlined my ideas as to the nature of an Economic General Staff. A full note of this discussion was made and sent to me for approval. I was in friendly correspondence with the Treasury about it till near the middle of November.

Practically at the same moment, the head of the Treasury, at the instruction of the Chancellor of the Exchequer John Anderson, issued an order to all Government departments telling them to have nothing to do with me about maintenance of employment. On November 11 Wilfrid Eady wrote withdrawing from further talk with me and asking me to forget our conversation; G. L. Watkinson's withdrawal followed a few days later.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, challenged about the ban, defended it in the House on December 7. When at the beginning of the year I wrote to my old friend and colleague in the Ministry of Labour, Ralph Assheton, to congratulate him on being made a Privy Councillor, an Honour which I described as the most sensible thing in the Honours List, I begged him not to reply. He did reply, but added: "I almost hesitate to communicate with you in any form lest I should find myself

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The Prime Minister was certainly too busy to see me or to put his mind to my problems during January 1943 or before he fell ill in February. Before he got better the debate and the Labour amendment had taken place. Suppose that Mr. Churchill had not been ill. Suppose that he had seen me, as Lloyd George thought he wanted to see me. Might I not have persuaded him that by my deal with Keynes I had freed my Report of any immediate dangers to the finances of this country? If, failing myself, the Prime Minister had seen Keynes, he might have taken a different line about the Report. Instead, he was led to issue the instruction of February 14, 1943, either from his inner consciousness or from bad advice.

He suffered from some desperately bad advisers at this time. There were those, for instance, who staged the tragic farce of the two Army Bureau of Current Affairs bulletins, involving withdrawal from the troops of a pamphlet on the Beveridge Report issued in December, and its replacement six months later by a pamphlet on Social Security featuring Mr. Churchill's broadcast of March 1943 and its deprecation of easy promises. I doubt whether, after this affair, Mr. Churchill could have avoided defeat, whenever a General Election came. The troops from this action had got it firmly into their heads that for social reform they must look elsewhere than to him. But Mr. Churchill could have avoided the division at the end of the debate of February 16 to 18, 1943, which marked the Labour Party as the one hope of a better world after the war. And if, having avoided that division, he had allowed me to help in preparing the Government plans on my Report, he might in the end have got something financially sounder, with more of contribution and less of taxation.

Looking back now on the events of February 1943, I believe that they present the decisive argument for the kind of War Cabinet which Lloyd George had established in World War I and which I had urged incessantly for World War II. The public reception of the Beveridge Report was something new and unexpected. If the line to be taken by the Government on this new situation had, as a matter of routine, come up for discussion by a group of men each with a mind of his own and with time for thought, if alternatively Mr. Churchill had had a man of the stature of Lord Milner free to inquire into special problems—as Lord Milner inquired into the food situation for Lloyd George in May 1917<sup>1</sup>—the course of political history might have been changed. But Mr. Churchill had no such group of independent minds at his disposal. He

<sup>1</sup> See my account of this in *British Food Control*, p. 45.



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had just removed from the War Cabinet to Aircraft Production the one man—Stafford Cripps—who might have done for him what Milner did for Lloyd George in May 1917. The Low cartoon which my colleagues of the Inter-Departmental Committee gave me had more point than its author could have imagined. Stafford Cripps came out of the War Cabinet. I with my Report never got inside. No member of the Government of any party, other than the Minister of Information, spoke to me about my Report after it had been made, or discussed any of its proposals with me. Mr. Churchill made up his mind and issued his disastrous minute of February 14 after consulting—whom? Mr. Churchill and his Government went on to exclude me from any further contact with the work which they had invited me to begin. Why did they take this line?

A friend of mine who, like myself, had spent his University years on Latin and Greek, and to whom I showed this chapter in draft, suggested that Tacitus had supplied the best comment, in discussing one of the policies of Augustus: *incertum metu an per invidiam*; “it is not clear whether he was moved most by fear or by jealousy.” Till I am able to do better than Tacitus, I must let Tacitus stand.

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time and the vital documents. It argued, not for a World-State, but for a super-national authority to exclude by compulsory arbitration recourse to national arms for national purposes, and it examined the practical and technical issues involved. Its theme, summed up in the title, has become self-evident today to anyone who will face the facts of the world:

Peace is a good thing which, like all other things worth having, can be won only at a price, by giving up something. The price, moreover, of any good thing can be paid only by those who have something to give, by the "haves" rather than by the "have-nots." The price of peace has to be paid in terms both of power and of wealth by those nations which are powerful and wealthy, by their deciding to use their power not for narrow advantage but for the common good of world order, by their deciding through economic co-operation to spread wealth throughout the world. The ground on which they may be asked to do this is that repeated experience of world war has shown that to be self-regarding in international affairs is the primrose path to mutual destruction, for the strong and for the weak, for the rich and for the poor alike.

My third Report had more to be said for it than anyone except myself has said. I had not, however, been a writer of reports all my life. I had spent most of my time on practical affairs, in the Civil Service or a University, bringing new things to birth in a changing world. As the boom and the boycott of Beveridge continued, the question arose whether I should not attempt to return to the world of affairs in the only way which Mr. Churchill's Government left open to me—by entering Parliament. There were several possible routes to this end. I might stand at a by-election during the war as an Independent, against any official party nominee. I might join the Labour Party. I might join the Liberal Party. I might prepare the way for standing as an Independent for the University of London whenever an election came.

The first of these alternatives I did not care for. It meant standing in opposition to the Government of Mr. Churchill; though his Government had decided, first, that they had no use for me in war and, now, that they had no use for me at all, I did not want to enter the lists against them so long as they were conducting the war. I had declined the chance of standing in opposition for Watford in February 1943, and I declined all similar suggestions from other constituencies later.

The second alternative had more to commend it, if I wanted political power. I had talks on this possibility with several of my friends in the

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Labour Party, ending with Herbert Morrison, who assured me that my views were quite sufficiently to the Left. I said that my difficulties in coming in with the Labour Party, apart from academic socialism, were connected with the leadership of the party and the strength of the trade union side as represented by Ernest Bevin; by this time the latter had become entirely unfriendly to me. Herbert Morrison, when I saw him, held no official position in the Labour Party, having been defeated for the post of Treasurer in June 1943, partly at least because of the line that he had taken in defending the Government attitude to the Beveridge Report in February 1943. I told him in June 1944 of my idea of standing independently, but added that, before reaching a definite conclusion, I would come to see him again.

Meanwhile the Liberals had not been idle. The Liberals, or at least their leaders, felt that by nature I belonged to them. Though I had never identified myself with them as a political party, I had taken part more than once in the Liberal Summer School. The Liberals had been the first political party to accept the Beveridge Report without reservations. Dingle Foot, to whom I sent proofs of my Report on Full Employment, gave his opinion that it will "be received with full approval and indeed with enthusiasm by the Liberals." He and Violet Bonham-Carter became active in May and June 1944 to persuade me openly into their camp; their practical proposal was to get me accepted as prospective candidate somewhere in Cornwall, with a view to reviving Liberalism from the west.

I fully understand what a tremendous bonfire of boats and bridges would be involved in your personal decision to join any party and abandon your present free and comfortable position of being "a voice." . . . I want you to harness the great tide which today is flowing Left but will not range itself behind the Labour Party with its narrow sectarian and "dotted line" discipline. Our Party has the right creed, outlook and approach, but not the leadership to give them.

So Violet wrote to me on July 5, 1944. To her I had written at the same moment admitting from our conversations that there might be an advantage in giving oneself a name of the Left to rally others, "but I say 'Radical' rather than 'Liberal,' until it is clear that the Liberal Party are really Radical throughout."

The fourth alternative—of the University of London—was the most attractive. It began to present itself at the end of 1943 and soon became a practical issue. The seat was held by my old opponent on the Senate—

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Sir Ernest Graham-Little. After failing to get the Conservative nomination in 1924 he had stood as an Independent, had beaten both the official nominees and had held the seat ever since. His strength lay in an organisation known as the U.L.G.A.—University of London Graduates Association—dating from the days when Lord Haldane and others had desired to make London a teaching University like other Universities and to dispense with the external degree. Graham-Little had opponents of many types—Conservatives who resented his method of winning the seat, Liberal and Labour men who disliked his Conservatism, in the University many of the teachers. Opposition to him in the University had led to the formation of U.L.S.—University of London Society—as a rival to the U.L.G.A. At the end of 1943 the secretary of the U.L.S., J. S. Cook, wrote to ask if I would be prepared to stand as an Independent Progressive for the University of London seat; there was no doubt in his mind that I would receive “overwhelming support from graduates of all parties and of none.”

I had beaten Graham-Little—just—for the Vice-Chancellorship and the saving of the Bloomsbury site in 1926. He had turned the tables on me by getting me off the University Court in 1931. I thought him a bad influence in University affairs and was ready to try another fall with him. Apart from this, if I wished to enter Parliament at all, this seemed to me an attractive way of doing so—preserving my independence of party and my academic connection, and saving me from the work and cost of an ordinary constituency. There were elections in May 1944 of persons to represent the graduates on the Senate of the University; the voting in all the faculties was encouraging as to the strength of the U.L.S. My friends in the University had no doubts that, if I did stand for Parliament there, I should be returned. By May 1944 we had established a Committee of the U.L.S. to find a candidate against Graham-Little. Whether the candidate should be I or another was left open till the autumn.

Apart from probable differences of opinion from Liberals of the right, desire for independence of any party still dominated me. I went off with J. to Scotland on July 8 to write about the price of peace, uncommitted politically but with expectation of returning in September to become an announced independent candidate for the University of London seat whenever an election should come, presumably not till the war was over.

There followed an accident which changed my personal history. On July 30, 1944, George Grey, Liberal Member for the Berwick-upon-Tweed Division of Northumberland since August 1941, was killed in

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action at Caumont in Normandy at the age of twenty-five. The seat had been won by Hugh Seely as a Liberal in 1935 in a straight fight with a Conservative and was held by him till he became a peer in 1941. Under the party truce in force for the war, the seat had been left to be filled by the Liberals, without opposition by Conservatives or Labour, and George Grey had been chosen. His successor would now be chosen in effect by the Berwick Liberal Association. Violet Bonham-Carter wrote on August 11 among other matters to ask me whether I would contemplate standing, if the Berwick Liberals approached me.

I sent two answers to her question: the first one hesitating, the second one immediately after, agreeing to burn my boats and stand as a Liberal for Berwick if I were asked. So the die was cast. When I met my University of London friends early in September, I told them that they would have to look for another candidate. I saw Herbert Morrison again and told him that I was not for Labour. I added that I thought that at my age I should probably help his side of the Labour Party best by developing the Liberals if I could, to frighten the other side of the Party.

On September 21 I went to Berwick and was adopted. I did not, as I had hoped, have an uncontested election, as a local Independent was put up against me. But on October 16 I was elected, with 8,792 votes to 1,269 for my Independent rival. My candle was lighted.

The question which J. and I were asked to answer in August 1944 was a hard one. We answered it without the chance of consultation with friends and without realising all that was involved.

In deciding, for instance, to stand for Berwick at the by-election of 1944, I never doubted my power of holding the seat indefinitely. I said to myself that a constituency which had been Liberal in 1935, one of the worst years in Liberal history, would certainly be Liberal in 1945 or thereafter. I did not, till after I had decided to accept, realise how strong the Conservative vote was there, how small had been the majorities for Sir Edward Grey, on how many occasions after him a Conservative had been elected—always when there was a Labour candidate and once without such opposition in 1931. There was no information on such points at Boat of Garten.

I realised again that representing Berwick, an ordinary constituency, as a party member meant making politics my principal activity and that this might mean leaving Oxford, and my salary and house as Master. I did not think that this need happen, if at all, till the war ended and normal political life returned; all the Colleges during the war were carrying

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Fellows on their strength who were away for public work. I found on return to my College in September that the Fellows there took a different view from mine. I saw each of them, individually, to tell them what I had in mind. The result was that eight of them, meeting by themselves, commissioned the senior Fellow to write to me that they were all agreed "in thinking that your election to Parliament and the important national business you would be involved in would be incompatible with the duties of a Master of this College in any circumstances, and especially at the present time." Two of the Fellows were not in Oxford at that time: Arthur Goodhart the present Master being in America, and G. D. H. Cole, whose house in Hendon had just been bombed, having gone to Cumberland with his wife to recover; when he heard of his colleagues' action, he wrote to me dissenting strongly. My view was that the question should have been left in abeyance till after a General Election; the Fellows had no power to enforce my resignation so long as I performed the statutory residence required of the Master. Alternatively, as I was still ten days short of my adoption at Berwick, I could have withdrawn there and returned to my plan of standing as an Independent for the University of London. But I had become by then committed in mind to the adventure of putting Liberalism on the map again as an effective political force, for international as well as for domestic issues. The Berwick accident seemed to me something like a call to do that, but the call had to be answered with all one's strength or not at all. I told the Fellows that I would resign the Mastership at any time when they had a successor ready after the end of March 1945. I told my Berwick friends that J. and I were coming to live in the constituency.

I had known before I began my political adventure that it meant giving up one of the posts that I held, as Chairman of the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee with its salary of £1,000 a year. I agreed now to give up my other post of the Mastership, with its salary of £1,800 a year and a house. Loss of income did not trouble me at that time; by regular writing for the *Observer*, the *News Chronicle* and the *Star* I was earning all that I seemed likely to need; in any case I was sixty-five and should be able to retire on the pension I had earned.

Fortunately the attitude of some of the Fellows helped me to save something from the financial wreck. I had written *Full Employment in a Free Society* as a piece of public service, with help placed at my disposal by three friends. I thought it in accord with the general rule adopted by the College on the outbreak of war that I should not make personal profit from this work. I offered the royalties to the College for an educa-

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tional trust; this was accepted by most of the Fellows and a trust deed was prepared. But one or two of the Fellows kept on making difficulties. So at the meeting when I announced my readiness to resign, the educational trust was abandoned and the royalties remained with me—a very substantial sum.

The real sufferer by all this was J. She had made the Master's Lodgings into a lovely home. She had now to make another home in Northumberland. She did so, at Tuggal Hall, as lovely as the Master's Lodgings in a different way. We settled there at the beginning of April 1945, not doubting that, with myself as member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, we should stay there to the end. We could not foresee what would happen to the Liberal Party in July. We did not realise how impossible financially and domestically the life of a country house was destined to become.

### *2. Six Months at Westminster*

Elected at Berwick on October 17, 1944, I took my seat on October 19, 1944. My arrival at Westminster was the occasion of an unusual pleasing incident. The Prime Minister, my old Minister of thirty-six years before, came across to greet me and pass a few words with me where I sat opposite to him on the Liberal benches.

My time at Westminster was limited in effect to six months, from October to the following April, and I made altogether eight speeches. My maiden speech of November 3, on the Government White Paper on Social Insurance Part I, admitted paternity for the Government's proposals while expressing a parent's hope that they could be improved. There followed on November 8 a speech on Part II of the Government's proposals, for Industrial Injury Insurance, and two more in this same field, one on the Family Allowances Bill (March 8, 1945) and one on the Bill to set up a Ministry of Social Insurance (November 14, 1944). I protested against this name, preferring Social Security, but a Conservative amendment was carried and accepted by the Government, changing the title still more, to National Insurance. This incident was celebrated by *Punch* with a cartoon of myself carrying a baby in wind and snow and declaring: "By any name the child is mine."

I made one more speech before Christmas, on November 17, on the Defence of Small Towns. I was speaking about Berwick-upon-Tweed; Newton Aycliffe had not been conceived. I made three more speeches after Christmas—one a short intervention in support of a new clause on the Representation Bill, allowing optional introduction of a transferable

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vote (January 23) and two on international affairs—The Yalta Agreement (February 27) and the San Francisco Conference (April 17).

The transferable vote clause was a piece of Liberalism, defeated on a division by 208 votes to 17. The speech on Yalta was in intention the most important of my speeches in Parliament. I accepted the Curzon Line as by justice the eastern boundary of Poland, and went on to argue that, if the Curzon Line was justice, adoption of it gave no ground for letting Poland spread westwards into Germany. I echoed what others had said, that any Polish Government should be one chosen to please the Poles and not one chosen to please either Soviet Russia or ourselves. I went on to a less popular line about Germany, in asking that we should not, without previous consultation of Parliament, "be committed to an unrealistic policy—I use that adjective advisedly—of continuing to govern Germany indefinitely, of dismembering Germany, of impoverishing Germany." I came at last to world organisation; we should not "without consultation or beforehand, be committed to a World Organisation for Peace which appears to make that organisation into a dictatorship of the Great Powers."

The debate on Yalta and the resounding vote of confidence in Mr. Churchill with which it ended were made preposterous by occurring before the most important decision of Yalta was known—the agreement to give each of five Great Powers an individual veto in the Security Council. This was announced for the first time on March 5, 1945. It led to a private protest by the Liberal Members of Parliament to the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, and to a published protest by myself in a letter to *The Times*.<sup>1</sup> This letter was written without our present knowledge of the pressures leading to the Yalta decisions. It was criticised from many quarters at the time. But can anyone today question the point made in its fourth paragraph?

Those who prefer realism to principle may be invited to realise that, under the proposed system of voting, a small Power in a dispute with one of the five Powers, however just the cause, is formally deprived of all hope of effective support by the world organisation for peace. The inevitable result of this will be that the small powers must seek security in alliances or dependence on one or other of the Great Powers. That, with spheres of influence, balance of power, competitive armaments and the rest of the whole bag of tricks, is the short way to a third World War.

<sup>1</sup> March 7, 1945. The letter was reprinted in *Why I am a Liberal*, p. 98.



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I had not in the spring of 1945 much time for the House of Commons itself. I was engaged mainly on the Liberal Campaign, becoming Chairman of its Campaign Committee and carrying through a Liberal Assembly on February 1 to 3 the Radical Programmes for which I stood.

I was engaged also on moving house from Oxford to Northumberland. J. and I spent Christmas 1944 at Rothbury looking at houses. I have always believed in living over the shop; assuming that I would be the member for Berwick-upon-Tweed so long as I lived, it was clear that we should live in Northumberland. We found almost by accident the perfect house at Tuggal Hall.

On Sunday March 11 I had given a farewell address to the undergraduates of my College; I printed it for distribution to them and others who might desire it thereafter. I told them that I was ceasing to be Master "because of what I may have the chance of attempting, not because I value lightly that which I am leaving behind."

. . . For me the academic life, for which I came here, is and always will be the best life, the life of ideas and reason and fellowship, and mingling of generations. That is the life I still desire.

But none of us can have the kind of life we most desire, except in a framework of order, political, economic, international. The formidable hour of peace is upon us. The moment is at hand when we have to rebuild the framework of civilisation. That is a task for Governments national and international. It is a political task and we must all in future be more political than ever before.

I told them how I had lived in change and in recurrent defeat of expectations.

. . . In these days I find myself continually doing some things for the first time, and other things for the last time. In the past six months I have made my first speech on a political platform, asked my first Parliamentary question, voted in a Division, made a maiden speech.

Yesterday I presided for the last time over an ordinary College meeting. I went out to see for the last time as Master our College boat make a bump upon the river. Today I sat in Chapel in the Master's seat for the last time and read the Bidding Prayer.

. . . . What I planned to do in life has again and again been prevented by events beyond my control, yet on each occasion I found something else worth doing. You should be ready to take your chances as they come, mastering your fate, never mastered by it, leading always full lives.

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### 3. *The Liberal Campaign*

By the time of our move to Northumberland it was plain that the war in Europe and the Parliament elected in 1935 were both coming to an end. In addressing the Conservative Party Conference on March 15, 1945, the Prime Minister made his first Party Speech since he had become leader of the Conservatives four and a half years before, brought the coming General Election to the front of the stage, and showed the ground on which he planned to fight. The object of the speech, as I described it at the time, was "to stake a claim for Conservatism and a claim for continuing Coalition on the war-time model in the immediate aftermath of the European war." Speeches by Ernest Bevin early in April made it plain that continuing coalition between Conservatives and Labour was unlikely. There followed on May 18 letters from the Prime Minister to the Labour and Liberal leaders outlining proposals for further coalition with a time limit. The proposals were declined by Clement Attlee. They were not declined by Archie Sinclair, but the Prime Minister treated them as declined by both parties and acted accordingly. On May 24 came announcement of a General Election to be held on July 5.

Forty years before, Mr. Churchill in his Liberal days had described July as the period for General Elections "dear to the hearts of Tory organisers, when democracy is supposed to be under the soothing influence of summer weather, and before villadom has departed on its holidays."<sup>1</sup> July had been chosen by the Tories for the Election of 1892. It was chosen by the Tories of 1945, in spite of the fact that July meant voting on an old register and that, owing to war-time movements, the numbers who would thus be prevented from voting would be exceptionally large. Villadom had lost its importance, but July was still as undemocratic a month as could be found.

The Liberals hoped for October. They were hit catastrophically by the shortness of time allowed them, unable to build up to more than 300 candidates. Inevitably, as their latest capture, I found myself forced to the front of the stage. Britain was covered with coloured posters depicting Beveridge in stride with the caption "Going my way?" And Beveridge in person found himself in limitless demand for speeches.

When it was all over, I wrote a full Election Diary, with six

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Randolph Churchill*, by Winston Spencer Churchill, M.P., Vol. II, p. 461 (Macmillan, 1906).

## BRIEF CANDLE

Appendices of speech notes, articles, letters, press-cuttings and the like. Today, even with this diary before me, I find it hard to believe that at the age of sixty-six I did all that is recorded there or anything like it.

In three months I made 154 political speeches, half in my own constituency and half outside, everywhere from Penzance to Aberdeen, from London to Lancashire and Greenock, from Hereford and Blaina Festiniog to Hull and Newcastle; the only principal centre of population which I did not visit was Birmingham. In the most intense period, from June 1 to July 4, I addressed 127 meetings in 31 working days, that is to say four meetings a day; from June 15 to July 4 the rate rose to nearly six a day, of which less than a quarter were informal loud-speaker meetings in my own constituency. Practically none of my speeches outside my constituency lasted less than half an hour; after an experience in Bolton on April 22, I gave up the idea of speaking for ten minutes only to crowds which, I was told, had come to hear me. Soon also I found that, to speak effectively, I must speak practically without notes, as I did at Huddersfield for Roy Harrod on June 26, or must make up my speaking notes on half-sheets anew for each meeting; only in this way could I keep any freshness in what I was saying. In addition to ordinary speeches, I poured out a continuous stream of articles, letters, messages to candidates, gramophone records, and a National Broadcast.

To fill out the picture I print in the Appendix to this volume a few additional extracts from my Election Diary, with its list of speeches from April 20 to July 18, and with the "Back Beveridge" leaflet issued by the Liberal Party.<sup>1</sup>

Somewhat oddly, the Election Diary omits one of my major publications of this period: *Why I am a Liberal*, a book of speeches and articles with lengthy preface and postscript. I rested good hopes on this book as an appeal to the intelligent. In fact it did not contribute to the campaign at all. The manuscript went to the publishers on March 5 with a promise of proofs in three weeks. But the book did not get published till June 25, within ten days of the poll. It was hardly reviewed and there is no evidence that anyone ever read it in Britain. But it was translated in the following year into Italian and Spanish, and I hope it may have done something to liberalise the users of these tongues.

At one of my first meetings of the campaign—at Holdsworth Hall in Manchester, on April 21—the mover of a vote of thanks to me, F. S. Oliver, said that the people of the country wanted both Churchill and Beveridge, to which I answered that there had been a time when these two people

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 21.

## THROUGH WORLD WAR II

worked together—when Churchill was a Liberal. At the same meeting one of the delegates presented me with some of the card stoppers that were being used on milk-bottles at Wallasey, with the caption "News—Beverage Plan for Fitter Britain—Drink More Milk." I used this often, saying that the Beveridge Plan for Better Britain was Drink More Liberalism.

This was in April, in the early easy stages of the campaign, before the election date was set and before I became, as I wrote in June to a friend who hoped to see me at Chester, "a gramophone record rushing hastily from one meeting to another."

The effort involved can be judged by two or three examples. My two days in Yorkshire on June 26 and 27 involved fourteen speeches and 200 miles of road journey in Yorkshire itself; the first of the two days began by my driving myself before breakfast forty-five miles to Newcastle. There were to have been two more meetings—at Hull and Beverley, but the car in which I was being driven there had a Beveridge poster hung on its radiator; the water boiled and blew off the connection and the relief car had taken a different route. The fourteen actual meetings included large halls packed to overflowing in Leeds, Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield. The second day of the Yorkshire tour ended by my driving myself forty-five miles back to Tuggal between 12.30 a.m. and 2 a.m., I then took eight meetings in my constituency and was driven back in the evening to Newcastle to give the last Liberal broadcast. This attracted both applause and savage criticism because it suggested that what Mr. Churchill, as well as others, might say during an election should be taken with a pinch of salt. The kind neighbour who had driven me in cheered me with her vision of votes rolling in to the broadcast by the million. But my own unfavourable judgment in my Election Diary was probably sound. I never really had leisure to consider this broadcast carefully before I made it. Next time I shall remember all the time that I am talking to the unconverted.

The week before Yorkshire I had spent a similar two days in Scotland, ranging from Aberdeen to Dumfries and Kelso with Edinburgh and Dundee in between—200 miles again of car plus railway journeys to and fro at frantic hours.

Twice over, an expedition to the west—one to Shrewsbury and Hereford, and one over North Wales from Colwyn Bay to Chester—involved an all-night upright journey back with changes at Crewe and York, debouching at Newcastle at 5 a.m., and driving myself home to breakfast. I had one and a half hours each time at Crewe and

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enjoyed the night life of the station with trains arriving and departing continually:

. . . Sitting opposite to me from Shrewsbury was an A.T.S. officer on her way to spend week-end leave at York with her fiancé, who was stationed in Scotland; I wished her easier meetings in future. She told me of the refreshment room always open at Crewe. So I went there and joined the midnight queue which wreathed itself round the room for sandwiches; the man in front of me turned round and said "Thank Heavens, this is my last time in this queue." So I asked him how often he had been there before: "Once a month since the war started." Then he burst out with the good news that his son had come safely through the war, and—he thought—was free of Burma.

All the time I had my own constituency to see to—one of the largest in England, fifty miles from Holy Island to Elsdon or the head of Coquet Dale, and forty miles from Berwick and beyond to Felton. J. did wonders, with a high spot at Lowick: "Here's William; you have the chance of him. Take it. When I had the chance, I didn't hesitate a moment." But her most attentive audience was gained one Sunday afternoon at Tuggal, when from outside the garage she tried the loud-speaker just fixed to my car upon an empty field across the road: her voice collected all the cattle and sheep from over the horizon; they listened to her raptly. Alas! they had no votes. No more had many of our human hearers; with the old and faulty register many were disfranchised.

Whatever we did, we could not give to my own constituency the care it needed. Early in June Archie Sinclair, writing to defend himself against what I had said to him about his speech at Paisley,<sup>1</sup> urged me not to sacrifice my personal candidature to the Liberal campaign. About the middle of June the friendly printer of my election address in Berwick warned me that my seat was not safe. A few days later Hugh Sherwood, who went speaking for me with J., urged me to give more time to my own affairs and to cut out one of my Yorkshire days. I considered doing so, but surrendered to a cry of pain and protest from my Yorkshire friends. After all I saw no point in getting into Parliament by myself; the whole point of my adventure was to re-create Liberalism as a substantial force in Parliament. My campaign meetings gave real hope of that; they were uniformly crowded and enthusiastic in applause.

In my own constituency it was clear by the end of June that I had a

<sup>1</sup> The speech appeared to me to assume continuance of Mr. Churchill as Prime Minister to finish the war against Japan.

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stern fight. So *The Times* described it on June 27: "the real Northumbrian is not one who is dazzled by personality. . . . Sir William Beveridge may find that he cannot defeat tradition." But I remained confident of my prospect of getting through—till the last day of all. Then in a tour of more than 30 polling stations on July 5 we realised both the strength of the Conservative organisation and its cars, and the miserable failure of our own organisation in important centres. J. returned to Tuggal from this tour convinced that we had lost in the Berwick-upon-Tweed Division.

### 4. *The Candle Goes Out*

Polling Day in my Division and most constituencies did not end my campaign labours. There were some constituencies where for varying reasons a later day for polling had been fixed, and some of them had Liberal candidates. After the main battle was over I found myself travelling to Greenock, Carlisle, Darwen and Bolton and, so late as July 18, to Hull. At home I set myself to recover from the exhaustion of electioneering largely by making book-shelves at Tuggal, while waiting for the declaration of results on July 26.

There came from Liberal Headquarters a summons to a Campaign Committee under my Chairmanship on July 31 to review the position of the party in the light of the election results. About the same time came a letter of July 17 from Brian Goddard, Organising Secretary of the Campaign:

Since my return to London I have been really amazed at the reports which I have received from many different quarters about the enthusiasm which has been aroused throughout the whole country by the fighting of the General Election. It would seem that many hundreds of people, many of them young, have come out to offer their services to Liberal Candidates, often from adjacent Constituencies if they had no Candidate of their own.

From the point of view of future organisation the Election must be regarded as a great asset to us, and I am convinced that we must harness all the enthusiasm at the earliest possible date.

But July 26 told a different story. For myself it was soon over. A glance at the ballot papers as we saw them being counted was enough to show that I was in serious danger. The final count gave for the Conservative 12,315, for myself 10,353, for the Labour man 5,782. I was out by 1,962 and the Conservative was in with 12,315 votes, while

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16,135 votes had been cast against him. The Labour candidate's wife had no doubt as to how her husband's supporters would have voted if he had not been in the field. I heard her rating him soundly for having put me out and put the Tory in.

J. and I went back to listen to the rest of the results as they came in. The Liberal disaster was complete. Accepting that, our spirits rose as each fresh result came in. We were nearer to Labour than Conservatives in any case. We felt that somewhat surprisingly the Conservatives had got what they deserved. The Tory choice of July for elections had availed even less in 1945 than in 1892.

We spent the last of our Member of Parliament petrol—as we had to spend it before July 31—in a drive through Chatton and Wooler into Scotland and back by Kelso and the Union Bridge. We recorded several chance encounters with their morals. One man we met was a former Liberal in my constituency who had not voted because he thought there should have been no election. Another was a young airman who by proxy had voted Labour because his father and all his family had voted Labour; he was strongly in favour of the Beveridge Report but had never heard of Liberalism as an effective political party and at a certain point begged to be excused from talking about politics which he did not understand. After these and similar encounters we began to wonder how democracy could be made rational. The answer probably is that it cannot be made rational in any reasonable time but that self-appointed rulers are in the end less rational still.

I set to to record our political adventure. My papers of that time—five or six bulky bundles of speeches, letters, leaflets, committee minutes and campaign plans—cover all aspects of "Brief Candle." I drew their moral in several personal memoranda—"My Entry to Politics," an "Election Diary," the "Day in the Country" which J. and I took with our last petrol, and finally, in a note which I had forgotten wholly but which is the germ of this volume—on the Power which I had never enjoyed and on the Influence which I had seldom lacked.

In September 1944 I had surrendered two attractive posts with salaries and other amenities in order to embark on a political career as a member of the Liberal Party. Ten months later the political career was at an end. Loss of my seat in Parliament meant decline of my market value as a writer of articles in the Press. I was left to live without an income, in a county strange to me, cut off from my former occupations and my friends. By August 1945 the foolishness of my decision of August 1944 was exposed. In trying to put Liberalism on the map again as an

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independent party I had been trying for something that could not be accomplished in my remaining years.

The prudent course, if I wanted to have a go at Parliament some time, was to burn as few boats as possible by standing as an Independent for the University of London whenever the election came. If I wanted office for the purpose of pushing through Social Security or Full Employment, that was probably as good a way as any; no one knew in 1944 what Government would follow war.

But my aims were much wider than Social Security and Full Employment, and these wider aims were fundamentally Liberal, in the relations of individuals and the State, and in the relations of each nation to other nations. Moreover I did come to believe genuinely in the "Liberal Revival" of which I talked. And I was over-confident about myself. At the height of the Beveridge boom, so many people had said to me that I could be elected for any constituency of Britain, that I would have been more than human if I had not been misled as to my popular appeal. Both my friends and I were misled; we did not allow for the strength of party feeling and party organisation. We did not realise how completely any appeal of the Liberal name to the mass of voters had vanished.

Looking back now, I have no doubt that the decisive factor in my acceptance of the chance of Parliament in August 1944 was the manner in which the chance came at the time when it came. In that August I was reading and thinking about nothing but peace and the price of peace; winning of security from war had become a purpose transcending all others in importance. But if one was to contribute anything towards that purpose, one must contribute at once, not wait till the end of fighting. The University of London seat meant waiting. The death of George Grey in battle offered the unexpected chance of doing something at once without going into opposition to Mr. Churchill. The death of George Grey seemed a call to prevent such deaths in future.

In my first adoption address at Berwick, on September 21, 1944, I put Freedom from War as the first of our aims, as the most important and the most difficult to attain of the three freedoms needed by mankind. I spoke of George Grey. He had come to see me for a long talk in Oxford. Like everyone else I had liked him. Now I mourned him:

. . . In one of the relatively few speeches which your late Member, Captain Grey, had the chance to make in the House of Commons, he said: "A large number of the ideas produced today seem to be based on the thesis that another war, if not inevitable, is likely. I



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believe that if we approach the problems of peace in that atmosphere, not only will another war be likely, but it will become inevitable." That is not the atmosphere in which I approach this problem. Having known George Grey and shared with all who knew him high hopes of the great service that he would live to render to his country and to the world, I approach this problem of peace in his spirit and with determination to do all that can be done to prevent waste of lives and abilities such as his in future.

In some of the closing speeches of the General Election Campaign, as at Alnwick on July 3, 1945, I said that I wished to go back to Parliament for the sake of social security, full employment and good housing, but a hundred times as much did I wish to go back to make one man's contribution towards making a lasting peace possible in the world. "Only by taking thought and making decisions now for the means as well as for the end of peace will those of us who are living and free when this war ends pay something of our debt to those who should have been living." So I concluded my volume on *The Price of Peace*. For me part of the price was embarking on a political adventure which never had a chance of success.

So much for my personal mistake. On the more important problem as to why the General Election of 1945 resulted as it did, so differently from the General Election of 1918, I must be content here to give, as one contribution to answering of this question, what I wrote when the result was fresh, in August 1945.<sup>1</sup> The gist of the answer is that the British people, from experience between the First and Second World Wars, had come to realise that after such a war one cannot wisely go back to the old economic ways; they decided to try something new. The most critical question today is whether after a Second War British people and other peoples realise that one cannot wisely go back to old political ways—in the sense of re-establishing international anarchy of sovereign states. Must we all wait for a Third War to teach us the disastrous folly of that? Do we still believe with Scithenyn that there is nothing so dangerous as innovation?

The third and last book of this study ends with defeats: defeat of the Prime Minister who had led Britain to victory; defeat of the purpose for which Britain had entered the war, by her guarantee to Poland; defeat of the purpose for which Britain and most of her allies had fought the war, for the independence of small nations and the freedom of their citizens; defeat of my personal adventure in politics.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, Section 21.



# *Epilogue*



## Epilogue

### The New Climates of the World

The choice is no longer between Utopia and the pleasant ordered world that our fathers knew. The choice is between Utopia and Hell.

Address in Hall of University College, Oxford,  
November 11, 1939.<sup>1</sup>

MY active life did not end at the age of sixty-six, with the defeat of my political adventure and the loss of all my paid employment:—as Master of University College, Oxford, as Chairman of the Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee, in regular writing for papers. I found myself, in place of these employments, returning to earlier interests and experiences.

I nearly returned to India—the land of my birth and early childhood—at the end of 1945 to advise on social insurance. When that project had to be abandoned, I returned to India and to my trade of author together by writing an account of my parents' time there, under the title *India Called Them*; I still receive letters from people who knew and valued my father's record from 1857 to 1892 as a friend of Indian self-government before such friendship was fashionable, and from the children of some who went to the school for Indian women which my mother began in 1873.

I nearly went to the United States again, for a lecture tour at the end of 1945. When that project failed, I visited many other countries that I had known before and some new ones. I saw Germany under occupation several times, and wrote about my experiences in the Press and in pamphlets.<sup>2</sup> I visited each of the north-western countries of Europe—Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland, all except the last on more than one occasion—partly to talk and still more to listen. I broke new ground in visiting Spain in March 1946. I went round the world with J. in 1948 and we wrote our first books together: *Antipodes Notebook* and *On and Off the Platform Under the Southern Cross*. New Zealand for both of us was new ground. Australia I had not visited since 1882 when I was taken there as a child of three to see some cousins. By 1948 the cousins, descended from my great-grandmother on the father's

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is printed in *Peace by Federation*, a Federal Union pamphlet published in April 1940, and with slight differences in *The Price of Peace*, p. 87 (Pilot Press, 1945).

<sup>2</sup> See *An Urgent Message from Germany*, 1946.

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side, numbered 300 and I saw as many of them as I could. In New Zealand I found a smaller but sizeable collection of cousins descended from a brother of my mother's.

I composed yet one more unofficial Report, by the methods of taking evidence and discussion which had led to the Beveridge Report on Social Insurance in 1942 and to *Full Employment in a Free Society* in 1944. The new study, on Voluntary Action as a means of Social Advance, was made possible by its cost being met by the National Deposit Friendly Society; it led to two volumes, the Report itself on *Voluntary Action* published in 1948 and a volume of evidence and memoranda published in 1949.

I composed yet one more Report at the request of the Government, by becoming in 1949 Chairman of the Broadcasting Committee, to advise on the British Broadcasting Corporation before a new Charter was granted. I repeated earlier experience of frankness and freedom of discussion, with witnesses and in committee. In the end we agreed—all but one—on essentials, and though there were minority reports and notes, all but one were on special points; there was one minority note alone which I felt bound to sign myself. After the Report had been made, I repeated earlier experience in regard to treatment of my work by those who had commissioned it; no word was said to me and no question was asked of me about the Report by either of the two Governments that considered it in turn.

I returned to past interests and experience, not only in making Reports but in other ways, trifling and important. I found myself, for instance, recommended for a peerage with prospect that decision on the recommendation would come while J. and I were abroad in Scandinavia; we repeated in 1946 the code adopted for my K.C.B. in 1918 and learned duly, in accord with this code, that "bacon will be available." I returned to Federal Union across national boundaries as the necessary step towards World Government and substitution of international justice for war; I have been from its beginning a member of the Parliamentary Committee for World Government. I returned to a still older interest, in seeking to develop new towns, in place of letting old towns grow.<sup>1</sup> I was Chairman from its beginning in 1947 of the Development Corporation for Newton Aycliffe in County Durham; for about two years, from October 1949 to the end of 1951, I was Chairman also of the Peterlee Development Corporation—another Durham New Town. I gave in the William Beveridge Hall of the University of London in May 1952 an address on "New Towns and the Case for Them."

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 53-4 above.

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Since I lost all regular employments eight years ago at sixty-six, I have been as variously busy as at any time in my life. But others have been busy also, changing the world as my generation knew it once. Fifty years ago those who set out to make a better world might feel, not unreasonably, that the greatest evil needing cure was poverty; eleven years ago in the Beveridge Report I listed five giants for attack—Want, Disease, Squalor, Unemployment and Ignorance. Today we face greater evils: Goliath War and Goliath Slavery. Today the inhabited world has become two feverishly arming camps. Today tyranny has returned with a completeness and a savagery never compassed by the Kings and Emperors of the past.

“Our country has come through a painful period of trial and disillusionment since the victory of 1945.” So the new President of the United States, himself one of the great figures of World War II, opened his first message on the State of the Nation, on February 2, 1953. But disappointment of nearly all the hopes and aims which led his nation into war under Franklin Roosevelt had long been implicit; 1945 was a year of defeat, not of victory, for the United States and Britain and all who think like them.

My story, as set out here, seems in many ways out of date—in its happy activity of work and play, in its aims, its hopefulness, and its difficulties and disappointments alike. Yet the central theme of my story—of Power and Influence as the two ways of doing things—is not out of date. The heart of the world’s problem today lies in finding the right means of controlling exercise of Power and securing a place for Influence.

In one of my first public speeches after issue of the Beveridge Report, at Oxford on December 6, 1942,<sup>1</sup> I defined democracy as a form of government which provides for peaceful change of the governors:

The essential part of democracy to me is not that I should spend a lot of time governing myself, for I have many more amusing things to do. But I want to be quite certain that I can change the person who governs me without having to shoot him. That is the essence of democracy. . . . To me a country is not a democracy, whatever else it may be and whatever other virtues it may have, if you cannot change the Government by a perfectly peaceful method of putting your cross on a piece of paper.

With this definition, it is clear today that the inhabited world is tending to divide itself politically under two climates—democratic and

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undemocratic. There is the democratic area of countries in which the Government, that is to say the individuals constitutionally authorised to use force against the citizens, can be changed at short intervals by a process as peaceful as marking a paper or pulling a lever in secret. There is the undemocratic area of countries in which the Government cannot normally be changed save by force or threat of force, involving risk of bloodshed; the shortest positive term for such a Government is "despotism" whether of an individual or of a group.

That political division of the world between the two climates of democracy and despotism is of great and growing importance is obvious, as is the tendency of the main democratic and despotic countries to move always in opposite directions. There is a curious analogy in this to one of the things that I learned from my meteorological studies between the wars, of the broad division of the world barometrically between two areas, positive and negative; when the barometer is relatively high over the positive area it is relatively low over the negative area; when the barometer falls in the positive area, it rises in the negative area; within each area there is as a rule general agreement.

The political division is not as simple geographically or as consistent as the meteorological one. There are democratic countries in every continent, and despotic countries in nearly every continent. And there are many capricious tendencies on both sides of the boundary. Some despotisms work habitually or occasionally with the democracies; the latter are not always in the same camp on a particular issue. There are many varieties and degrees of despotism; some tyrants seek to prescribe what their citizens shall read or hear or see or say; others leave much freedom of speech and writing—so long as it does not threaten their power. There are as many varieties and degrees of democracy.

No excuse is needed for using the term democracy as I have used it here. The word etymologically means that power rests with the people; since the people in any large community cannot exercise power directly, the only rational meaning of the word is that those who exercise power on behalf of the people should be subject to recall by the people. In practice the word democracy is seldom used rationally. It has become for most politicians a term of endearment for the institutions they prefer or of praise for any measures that they desire. But democracy and Utopia are two words, not one, with two vowels only and no consonants in common. And democracy contains nothing about equality: its sole reference is to power and control of power.

The leading democracies and the leading despotisms are now in un-



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resolved conflict throughout the world. Which of the two political climates offers the best hope for mankind is not open to doubt. Power—ability to give orders enforced by sanctions—is necessary to keep wrongdoers in check and to ensure justice. But power, unless it is held as a terminable trust by the person wielding it, all but inevitably corrupts the person who wields it. Despotism stands for interference with essential human freedoms, through fear that exercise of freedom may shorten its lease of power. Despotism in practice has been aggressive; the man who enjoys ruling over 50,000,000 people finds it hard not to believe that he would get twice as much enjoyment if he had 100,000,000 subjects, and ten times as much out of 500,000,000. Aggressiveness is natural to despots, as is belief in national sovereignty—the anarchy that leads to war: the man who enjoys lasting power at home is less likely than the democratic governor to clip his own wings by surrendering part of his power to an authority for justice between nations. Aggressiveness of despots may not in the end prove inevitable; they may become content to be cocks on their own dunghills. But dunghill contentment has not been shown hitherto. Aggressiveness was the mark of the German and Italian despotisms between the wars. Aggressiveness has been the mark of the major despotism that threatens freedom everywhere today.

That the democracies must be strong enough for war to be able to stop forcible spread of despotism to themselves is self-evident. But that is one side only of their task.

In the last days of July 1945 I received a letter from Gothenburg, from a gathering of progressive Swedish students, begging to be advised by me as to what was the task of intellectuals in the present condition of the world. Their letter was dated July 26, the day of my defeat at Berwick, and I sent them an answer from the heart: "The task of intellectuals in Sweden, as elsewhere, is to introduce reason and foresight into practical affairs. Only if it is governed by reason will democracy be sufficiently successful in practical affairs, to make certain of surviving."

Democracy is better than despotism, offers the only hope for mankind of freedom, of justice, and of peace. But is democracy, as we know it, good enough? A general election in any of the larger democracies today, in the United States or in Britain, in France or in Italy, is not conspicuously a feast of reason. If democracy is not all that nineteenth-century fancy used to paint, how should it be made better? Can it be made to do well enough to be sure of survival?

In an Epilogue to another story I can only ask these questions. I cannot attempt the answers. But, having regard to Britain's internal

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revolutions since the beginning of my story, it may be worth while to name some of the problems illustrated by the story, and facing us today. We have to learn as a democracy to choose our governors wisely, by reason, not greed. We have in an economically flattened society to find men who will undertake public office in a public spirit, not for personal gain or glory; we must carry on the aristocratic tradition without the aristocrats.<sup>1</sup> We have to keep open the channels for new ideas of unknown men to reach and influence the temporary holders of power. We seem to have solved for the present the problem of full employment, but we have not solved two of the problems to which full employment in a free society gives rise—how to preserve the value of our money against endless rise of costs, wages and prices, and how without fear of unemployment to secure the maximum of output.

Democracy must be efficient in practical affairs, as efficient as the nearest despotism. Democracy must be democratic in substance, not only in form. This means that the process of choosing and changing holders of power shall be unaffected by privilege of established organisation and wealth, that the holders of political power, when an election comes, shall compete with their opponents on equal terms. Power must not be used to prolong itself. Power, the stupid necessary mule, should have neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity.<sup>2</sup> In the leading democracies today many special measures have been taken to secure this. But, at any risk of causing offence, a question must be asked about Britain. Is it consistent with democratic principle that organisations like the trade unions which have received special privileges for industrial work should become tied to a political party? Ought it to be difficult for an individual to earn his living by employment without contributing from his wages to the retention of power by one set of politicians rather than another? A one-party State in any form is the destruction of freedom.

Democracies need to look within. They must look without as well. They must, in one way or another, abandon and lead others to abandon any claim to absolute sovereignty—the claim to kill in one's own cause without selection or limit. The head-note of this Epilogue is not a paradox but a truism. If with our growing control over nature we could abolish war, we should be in Utopia. If we cannot abolish war, we shall plunge ever deeper into a hell of evil imagining and evil doing.

The world is an unhappy place. The picture of yesterday's hopeful

<sup>1</sup> *Letter to Posterity*, Broadcast of December 30, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, Section 22.

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collaboration in curing evils of want and disease and ignorance and squalor, as I have tried to draw it here, looks like a dream today.

At the close of the Napoleonic Wars, Shelley painted a picture of "England in 1819," magnificently comprehensive in invective:

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying King,—  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—  
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,  
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,  
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—  
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—  
An army, which liberticide and prey  
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,—  
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay,  
Religion Christless, Godless,—a book sealed;  
A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—  
Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may  
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

A new Shelley, in 1953, would find equal ground for invective as wide as the world: in never-ending war; in justice as the will of tyrants; in the brutality which flows from the general cheapening of human life in war; in use of men's highest gifts for more and more diabolic aims; in systematic suppression of truth and freedom of thought and speech; in the barriers to movement which shut men off from personal contact with their fellows; in the nemesis by which those who rule by terror live always in terror for themselves.

An Ogpu which liberticide and prey  
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield.

Between the two wars it seemed possible to attribute the troubles of the world in the main, not to bad intentions, but to good intentions misdirected, so that what the world needed chiefly was more knowledge. I remember saying this to a congress of University students, in the city where I am writing today, as late as the spring of 1934. Today we face a grimmer picture, of power in the hands of men whose intentions, judged by any standard of respect for humanity, justice and freedom, are not good intentions but bad intentions.

But a new Shelley, like the old Shelley, would end on a note other than despair.

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Men can be taught to hate but they are born into love and spend infancy and long childhood under loving care; it cannot be inevitable that they should all forget what they learned in their most impressionable years. Some men are little more than brutes; all men have the brute in them, are moved by fear and greed. But all men have in them what brutes have not—reason and speech and emotions other than fear and greed. All men have capacity for religion—the sense of the unscen. If the religion of Christ could come to its own in the world, mass murder would become unthinkable.

The theme of my story returns at its end. Power as a means of getting things done appeals to that which men share with brutes, to fear and to greed; power leads those who wield it to desire it for its own sake, not for the service it may render, and to seek its continuance in their own hands. Influence as a means of getting things done appeals to that which distinguishes men from brutes. The way out of the world's troubles today is to treat men as men, to enthrone influence over power, and to make power revocable.

The world today is a graveyard of millions, of men and women and children dead before their time. The world today looks like a graveyard in another sense—the burying-place of hopes for which so many gave their lives in war. But the human spirit does not die. From all these graves some day human kindness will return to humankind.